Maharaja Ranjit Singh And His Times

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edited by

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Preface

The title of this volume comes directly from the subject of a seminar organized by the Department of History, Guru Nanak Dev University, in December 1980 as a part of the countrywide celebrations of the 200th birth anniversary of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Seminars held in honour of celebrities often tend to become ritualistic. We decided therefore to circulate a list of themes covering rather unexplored aspects of the subject. We had a good response from a large number of scholars who also participated in the seminar. Our hope was to break some fresh ground in the study of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and his times. Like all such hopes it has been partially realized. We leave it to the reader to judge whether or not this volume adds some depth to our understanding of the Punjab during the early nineteenth century.

The papers published in this collection cover a wide range of themes from politics and government to art and literature. The other main aspects covered are historiography, agrarian and urban economy, social structure and social mobility. All the participants had been requested to prepare abridged versions of their papers for the seminar. For publication too, we have tried to economize on space, but not at the cost of essential argument or information. In fact, reduction in size has made the volume rather compact. We are thankful

to the scholars for their contributions. The photographic reproduction of the medal of Maharaja Ranjit Singh at the back of this volume comes from Mr Mohan Singh's contribution.

In preparing this volume for the press we have received immense help from our fellow-workers in the Department of History. Dr Surjit Singh Hans has shared with us the task of editing several papers which appear in this volume. Mr Sukhwant Singh, Mr Harish Chander Sharma, Mr J.S. Bains and Mr. S.S. Sagar have heen as much helpful in seeing this volume through the press as in preparing it. The entire typescript was prepared afresh by Mr Sukhnandan Singh and Mr Jaswant Singh. The publication of this volume is essentially the result of a collective effort. The editors only impersonate the Department as a formality.

We are thankful to Mr Jagjit Singh Walia, Manager of the University Press, for his keen cooperation in the publication of this volume. Without his help it would not have been possible to bring it out at this time. We are glad to add that the cover design has been prepared by the artist of the University Press, Mr Vimal Tiwari.

Without the initiative and interest of Dr K.S. Gill, Vice-Chancellor, Guru Nanak Dev University, it would have been possible neither to organize the seminar nor to publish this volume. We are grateful to him for his inaugural address as well.

J. S. Grewal

Indu Banga

Inaugural Address

Mr Chairman, Professor Grewal, Professor Kapur and distinguished participants in the seminar! It is my privilege to inaugurate the seminar on Maharaja Ranjit Singh and His Times. Professor Grewal very correctly said that I was reluctant to undertake this assignment. But that was only because of my ignorance of the subject. When he insisted and persisted I felt that if politicians can often speak endlessly on all subjects under the sun while in fact knowing little about them why can't I do the same? The Vice-Chancellor may not be a registered politician, but he is a sort of unregistered politician. I, therefore, ventured to undertake this assignment, but lest I reveal my ignorance, I will limit myself to a few words.

Guru Nanak Dev University undertook to do this seminar as a part of the second centenary celebrations of Maharaja Ranjit Singh organized by the Punjab Government. Rather than celebrating the occasion in the traditional Indian way with light, sound and fury, it was thought more befitting for a university that it should do this by organizing a scholarly seminar on the subject. I had my apprehensions that perhaps not many scholars will respond to our request for participation in the seminar. But these have proved unfounded.

I must congratulate Professor Grewal that he did arouse a lot of interest in the subject, and today we have 30-35 scholars assembled here. This is very gratifying indeed, and I congratulate him for this success.

The seminar covers a wide spectrum, as Professor Grewal has already mentioned, from historiography to the evidence of contemporary observers, from the society, and agrarian and urban economy of the times to politics and political ideas, art and literature, and the relationship between the state and religion. It is a very wide spectrum indeed. I have every hope that the discussions at the seminar will make a solid contribution to the understanding of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and his times.

However, I have one or two submissions to make. Firstly, I would submit that in evaluating Maharaja Ranjit Singh and his times, we should avoid judging him by the standards, political concepts, and ethical values of the late 20th century. He should be judged not in terms of today's political behaviour, conduct and concepts but in terms of the times in which he lived and ruled, mainly the early part of the 19th century.

Secondly, I would also caution the distinguished participants against the temptations of going to the other extreme. I happened to participate, rather to be present, in a conference called by the Chief Minister of the Punjab to chalk out a programme for the celebrations. And at that conference there were many people, including

several from the universities, who eulogized Maharaja Ranjit Singh, almost to say that he was a god on earth This may be all right for the politicians, and for the general public, but I think we have to give Maharaja Ranjit Singh what is his due, no more and no less.

All manner of things were said about him : that he was the founding-father of secularism in India, a point emphasized again and again, and by speaker after speaker; that he was a benign ruler who cared for nothing but the welfare of his people; that he was a devoted servant of the Panth and ruled only for the sake of the Panth; and in proof it was said that he never had any coronation and he never struck his coins. I would submit that these formulations may benefit an emotional outburst that normally goes with an occasion like this. The historians should scan that period more objectively and try to ascertain the facts.

The present ruling party stressed again and again that he was the founder of secularism in India. Frankly, I find it very hard to accept that claim. The essence of secularism is the divorce of state and politics from religion. It is not equal respect for all religions, which is claimed for Ranjit Singh, or even equal non-respect for all religions. The idea is very simple. The divorce of religion from politics is analogous to non-alignment in international affairs. It does not imply a double or triple alignment. It is to divorce foreign policy from any line-up, and to set national

interest as the only guiding principle. Similarly, secularism is, to my mind, the separation of religion from politics. I can not think of any other criterion of secularism. On this criterion, it would be difficult to sustain the claim that Maharaja Ranjit Singh was the founder or the founding-father of secularism in India.

Great claims were made for the Maharaja as a great Punjabi statesman and a great Punjabi ruler. A great Punjabi ruler certainly he was, but whether he was a great Punjabi statesman, I am not equally sure. If he really was conscious of the Punjabi perspective, I am sure he would have done something to make Punjabi the official language of his state. The language remained Persian, just as it was elsewhere. Instead of spending all his energies towards conquering the non-Punjabi speaking lands and pushing his kingdom to the frontiers of Afghanistan, I think his primary interest should have been to unify the Punjabi speaking people under his rule. But instead, he allowed himself to be pressurised to be, what Professor Bal would say, an anti-Afghan buffer between the British colonial rulers and the Russians. I would, therefore, say that what happened after his death was not unexpected; some of the elements of that were already there. It is no wonder that his kingdom started crumbling soon after his death, and within ten years not a trace of it was left.

I would, therefore, submit that there should be a fair, proper and unemotional evaluation of

his place in history. He certainly was a great Punjabi ruler. In fact, he is the only independent ruler of this land during the last several centuries. He has no rival at all to contest his greatness. He was a great soldier, a great commander, and a great leader, all this despite the handicap of illiteracy. He was an astute judge of men. He certainly was a shrewd politician. His 'secularism' was in fact a recognition of the political realities. In his kingdom the Sikhs were the minority and Muslims and Hindus were the majority. Therefore, religious tolerance was the only viable policy. And it was to his advantage to include brilliant men of all communities in his council of ministers.

He was certainly a great ruler and he does have an important place in Indian history and, I believe, an exclusive place in Punjab History. It is a well worth the attention of the scholars to study him and his times. I am sure that this august assembly of brilliant scholars and historians would, by their deliberations contribute a good deal to the study of the subject. It is my privilege to inaugurate the seminar and I wish it the best of success. Thank you very much.

K. S. Gill

The Historians of Maharaja Ranjit Singh

J. S. Grewal*

All history is written in a social context. That is why historical writing tells us as much about the situations in which it is written as about the subject. This is equally true of historical writing on Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Furthermore, when historians start writing on a subject, they create a historiographical background and a historiographical context. The work of the historians of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, collectively, is our contextual heritage today. An awareness of this heritage can make us more self-aware in our task.

For the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh the first to come in the field were the historians who wrote in Persian. More influential, however, proved to be the historians who started writing in English. They are regarded as the founders of 'modern' historical writing. The first English historian to write on Maharaja Ranjit Singh was Henry T. Prinsep whose *Origin of the Sikh Power in the Punjab and Political Life of Maharaja Ranjit Singh* was published in 1834. He was followed by W. L. M'Gregor, G. Carmichael Smyth and Joseph Davey Cunningham, all of whom wrote after the Maharaja's death but before the fall of the kingdom of Lahore. These four British historians, thus, wrote contemporaneously with the Maharaja and his successors.

After the fall of the kingdom of Lahore, significantly, only one British historian wrote on the Maharaja : Sir Lepel Griffin. Already, Sayyid Muhammad Latif had written a

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general history of the Punjab of which a substantial part was devoted to Ranjit Singh. Before the end of British rule in India, other Indian historians started writing on the Maharaja, notably G. L Chopra, N. K. Sinha and Sita Ram Kohli. After Independence, several historians of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and his times have contributed to our understanding of the subject.

It is not possible to analyse this rich tradition in all its aspects and ramifications. The subject is too vast to be treated in a short paper. Keeping in view the occasion, however, an attempt may be made to outline the progress of our understanding of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and his times. Also, it may be useful to concentrate more on the historiographical background than on the present-day context.

As indicated in the title of Prinsep's work, only a part of it deals with the life of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. But this is the more substantial part, of over 100 pages; the late 18th century background is given in only three chapters of about 40 pages. It may be obvious, therefore, that Prinsep's primary concern was with the Maharaja. His book was published after commercial treaties had been signed by the British with the Amirs of Sindh and the Maharaja, virtually obviating the expansion of his kingdom in the direction of Sindh. There is no doubt that Prinsep was inspired to write on the Maharaja because of the interest of the British Indian Government in his position as a formal friend of the British. His book could give an assessment of the Maharaja's position, besides educating the public in Great Britain regarding the dealings of the British in India upto a crucial point in their policies.

Prinsep got ready-made materials for his book in the reports of the Political Agents, W. Murray and C.M. Wade, on the events relating to the reign of the Maharaja and the late 18th century background. Prinsep's book contains for the most part a narrative of political events from Maharaja Ranjit Singh's occupation of Lahore to his meeting with William Bentinck at

Ropar in 1831. However, besides occasional asides on the events, Prinsep devoted a separate chapter to the 'character and policy' of the Maharaja, his revenues and the strength of his army. We may be sure that Prinsep's concern in this chapter is more practical than academic.

Summing up the results of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's activity till 1831, Prinsep refers to his territorial possessions as consisting of the entire Punjab between the rivers Satlej and Indus, Kashmir and the vassal territories in the Himalayas, including Ladakh, 45 *ta'alluqas* on the British side of the Satlej, and Peshawar, Dera Ismail Khan, and Dera Ghazi Khan across the river Indus. The entire resources of the Maharaja amounted to over two and a half crores of rupees, the territories being less productive in Prinsep's opinion than under the Mughals. The army of the Maharaja exceeded 80,000, but only a third of this force was regularly trained and disciplined. Another third of his army consisted of *jagirdari* troops, while the remaining third consisted of irregular cavalry and infantry. His artillery contained about 750 pieces of guns and swivels in almost equal numbers. This was an impressive achievement; it was a personal achievement of the Maharaja.

The government of Maharaja Ranjit Singh was in Prinsep's view a pure despotism, without any constitution or fixed form. 'There is no law, written or oral, and no courts of justice have been any where established'. There was no systematic administration either. His entire territory, according to Prinsep, was in the hands of the contractors of revenue who had 'full power to deal with the lives and properties of the producing classes of the population'. The Maharaja could control them with his standing army, and oblige them even to part with profits unduly made. Merchants and traders were protected by him, but the duties imposed on their goods and merchandise were immoderate. On the whole, the government and administration of the Maharaja was over-centralized, making it impossible to be carried on 'when the present regulator of all is removed from the scene'.

Prinsep saw no possibility of expansion in the territories of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The master of this moribund and ill-administered kingdom was nonetheless a genuine ally of the British Indian Government. 'He seems to be now thoroughly convinced, that its friendship and engagements may be relied upon, and there cannot be a doubt that if ever the occasion should arise, to render it necessary to make preparation against invasion from the west, he would side, heartily with us, and show zeal in repelling the invader. His professions, his interest, and his inclinations, are all for us at present'. This was supposed to be an achievement of Lord William Bentinck.

In his appreciation of Maharaja Ranjit Singh Prinsep was lukewarm. The Maharaja was not educated in any branch of learning or science but he could understand the substance of all papers submitted to him in Punjabi, Hindi or Persian. 'Confidential secretaries are perpetually in attendance, and are frequently called up in the night to expedite orders, as the sudden recollection, or caprice of the Maharaja, suggests the issuing of them'. He possessed an excellent memory, a lively imagination and an astute understanding of men and their motives. In his disarming frankness, he was also a master of dissimulation, which enabled him to veil subtle designs and even treachery. He was personally brave, but never bold to the extent of being adventurous. Address, cunning and corruption were the instruments of his success. There was no ferocity in his disposition and he never took life even under trying circumstances. But he was selfish, sensual and licentious in the extreme. No moral considerations restrained him in the pursuit of his ambition or pleasure.

Prinsep himself wondered why the Maharaja was not seen in this light by his people. Moral judgment on persons was regarded as a duty of the historian by Prinsep and his contemporaries in Great Britain. His values of judgment too were those of his contemporaries. His cold, perhaps calculated, analysis of the character of the Maharaja had the merit of plausibility, but his preoccupation with moral judgment did

not enable him to understand the Maharaja in relation to his own people.

M'Gregor wrote about Ranjit Singh with reference to Prinsep's work. He tells his readers that his source of information on the Maharaja, unlike Prinsep, was neither Murray nor Wade. A history of the Maharaja, written in Persian by a Muslim of Batala, was translated into Urdu by one Abdulla Shah for M'Gregor. He says elsewhere that the source of information for Murray and Wade was also this very work. Nevertheless, M'Gregor's original inclination was to leave out the military career of the Maharaja; he used the Urdu version only in the interest of continuity. He is apologetic : We trust our readers will excuse us, if they do not find anything new in this portion of our work'. M'Gregor's political narrative stops in fact at 1831 and differs from Prinsep's only with regard to some dates. He does not claim to have improved upon Prinsep in this part of his work, and he does not narrate any political events of the near-decade following.

Obviously, M'Gregor was not primarily concerned with the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. His *History of the Sikhs,* in two volumes, was meant to cover the entire period of Sikh history from the birth of Guru Nanak to the capture of Kot Kangra by the British after the first Anglo-Sikh War. More than half of his entire work is devoted actually to the War. His purpose in writing on the Sikhs was 'to render justice to all those enlightened men and gallant spirits, whose skill and intrepidity combined to repel the insolent invasion of a rebellious army and to consolidate the British power in the north-west of India'. For celebrating the valour and martial success of the British in India and to justify their measures and policies 'the former despot of the Punjab', was of little interest to him.

There was one thing, however, which M'Gregor claimed to know better than Prinsep on the basis of his own experience : the character of the Maharaja. M'Gregor had drawn up a paper in 1838 for Lord Auckland on the court of Maharaja Ranjit Singh which he thought could elucidate the Maharaja's char-

acter, especially his friendly feelings towards the British. Three chapters in M'Gregor's book are merely a reproduction of that paper. Then, finally, he discusses the Maharaja's views regarding the joint invasion of Afghanistan. Though himself convinced of the impolicy of that invasion, the Maharaja did not oppose the views of the British. Yet the idea that the British, and not he, should be the conquerors of Afghanistan disturbed him; the tears that he shed on the news of success were not the tears of joy but sorrow. For the rest, M'Gregor relates incidents from his personal experience as the physician of the Maharaja, which present him in a better light as a ruler and as a person than the assessment made by Prinsep.

G. Carmichael Smyth wrote his *History of the Reigning Family of Lahore* chiefly on the basis of notes kept by Captain Gardner of the Sikh Artillery which related to Ranjit Singh's successors. Unlike M'Gregor, Smyth did not subscribe to the view that the Sikhs had made an unprovoked attack on the British, or that the British had acted towards them with great forebearance. But this was not because Smyth had any sympathy with the rulers of Lahore. He argued in fact that there was no legitimate ruler at Lahore after the death of Naunihal Singh. He had no evidence other than rumour and gossip to support his contention Neverthelsss, he projected this impressionistic opinion into the past, depicting sexual license and political treachery as its normal features. In factual terms, Smyth relates the received tradition about the ancestors of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, giving only a few pages to his career after the occupation of Lahore upto the conquest of Multan, on the assumption that this history was well known through Prinsep's work. One dimension of Smyth's work may be noted as relevant here : denigration of 'the old Robber' and his family. Moral indignation was mounting with the mounting pressure on the successors of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

By contrast, J.D. Cunningham wrote metaphorically as a Sikh. His work has received greater attention and appreciation as the epitome of early British historical writing on the Sikhs. About

a hundred pages, or nearly a third of the text of his *History of the Sikhs* from the origin of the nation to the battles of the Satlej, are devoted to Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Cunningham was influenced by Liberal Anglican ideas. The concept of nationality was important in his eyes. In the movement initiated by Guru Nanak he saw the origins of the Sikhs as a nation, and regarded Maharaja Ranjit Singh as a national ruler who laboured 'with more or less of intelligent design, to give unity and coherence to diverse atoms and scattered elements, to mould the increasing Sikh nation into a well-ordered state, or commonwealth, as Govind had developed a sect into a people, and had given application and purpose to the general institutions of Nanak'. The Maharaja was an absolute monarch, but only over willing and obedient subjects. Furthermore, 'he knew that he merely directed into a particular channel a power which he could neither destroy nor control'.

Unlike the majority of his British contemporaries, Cunningham introduced a large measure of relativity in his assessment of the Maharaja and his government. He was reluctant to apply abstract standards of judgment which tended to ignore the genius of a people and their historical circumstances. 'It is not simply an unmeaning truism to say, that the Sikh government suited the Sikhs well, for such a degree of fitness is one of the ends of all governments by ruling classes'. The youthful vigour of Ranjit Singh's kingdom reminded Cunningham of 'rising medieval Europe'. His sympathy with the Maharaja sprang from his conviction that a young nation deserved immunity from an overwhelming external circumstance. All possible advantages of British rule were a poor compensation for the actual loss of 'national independence'.

Cunningham was unique among the British historians of the Sikhs to be aware of the tragic complexity of large historical processes. He visualized the Anglo-Sikh conflict as an act in a vast drama in which huge social forces overshadowed the individual players. 'The Sikhs and the English are each irresistibly urged forward in their different ways and degrees towards

remote and perhaps diverse ends; the Sikhs, as leaders of a congenial mental change; the English, as the promoters of rational law and material wealth; and the individual chiefs and rulers can merely play their parts in the great social movements with more or less of effect and intelligence'. Cunningham's sympathy with the weaker side comes out in delicate irony inseparably woven into the texture of his language. For example, Cunningham refers to the English schemes of navigation and trade of the early 1830s, which had been celebrated by Prinsep in his book fifteen years earlier, in the following terms : it now caused the English 'to deprecate the ambition of the King of the Sikhs, and led them, by sure yet unforeseen steps, to absorb his dominion in their own, and to grasp, perhaps inscrutably to chasten, with the cold unfeeling hand of worldly rule, the youthful spirit of social change and religious reformation evoked by the genius of Nanak and Govind'.

With asides and reflections, Cunningham enlivened his narrative of the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh to evoke a sympathetic image of his achievement. The Maharaja had found the Punjab a waning confederacy, a prey to the factions of its chiefs, pressed by the Afghans and the Marathas, and ready to submit to English supremacy. 'He consolidated the numerous petty states into a kingdom, he wrested from Kabul the fairest of its provinces, and he gave to the potent English no cause for interference. He found the military array of his country a mass of horsemen, brave indeed but ignorant of war as an art, and he left it mustering fifty thousand disciplined soldiers, fifty thousand well-armed yeomanry and militia, and more than three hundred pieces of cannon for the field'. Above all, his rule was founded on the feelings of his people.

A more careful researcher than any of his predecessors, Cunningham combined large sweep with a meticulous concatenation of facts. He was thoroughly familiar with the works of all who had written before him. He made use of travel accounts and official documents. He made good use of Prinsep's work, but without following it blindly. He gave a

connected account of political events after 1831 in about a fourth of his account of the Maharaja's reign, which was a new contribution. The first full account of the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh is to be found, thus, in the work of Joseph Davey Cunningham.

The four important phases in the career of Maharaja Ranjit Singh for Cunningham were : the early phase upto the occupation of Lahore, from the occupation of Lahore to the Treaty of Amritsar, from the Treaty of Amritsar to 1823, and from 1824 to his death in 1839. Like his predecessors, Cunningham believed that Ranjit Singh had obtained a royal investiture from Shah Zaman to occupy Lahore, though coveted because of its association in the minds of men with the possession of power. The Treaty of Amritsar was important in the career of the Maharaja as it recognized him as the chief of Lahore and confined his future conquests to the north and westward of the Satlej. By 1823, he had mastered the Punjab plains and hills, and the Afghan provinces of Kashmir, Multan and Peshawar. Before his death in 1839, he had ostensibly reached the summit of his ambition : 'He was acknowledged to be an arbiter in the fate of that empire which had tyrannized over his peasant forefathers, and he was treated with the greatest distinction by the foreign paramounts of India'. But he could not help feeling that he was 'in truth fairly in collision with the English'.

Writing with reference to the work of his predecessors, Cunningham tried to correct many a wrong impression to present the Maharaja in a better light. The superiority of the Sikh army could not be attributed to the labours of the European officers like Ventura, Allard, Court and Avitabile : 'The Sikh owes his excellence as a soldier to his own hardihood of character, to that spirit of adaptation which distinguishes every new people, and to that feeling of a common interest and destiny implanted in him by his great teachers'. The employment of Ventura and Allard was not the cause but the result of Ranjit Singh's views on the organization of his army. 'They gave a moderate degree of precision and completeness

to a system already introduced'. Modernization of the army was due to the Maharaja's own initiative and independent thinking.

Cunningham refused to give credence to the exaggerated reports of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's immorality : it was 'idle to regard Ranjit Singh as an habitual drunkard or as one greatly devoted to sensual pleasures'. The charge of partiality and favouritism too was misplaced. The Maharaja needed the services of competent and devoted men; he needed also a counterpoise to the egalitarian stance of his fellow Sikhs. Thus, while he raised Brahmans, Rajputs, Khatris and Sayyids to high positions of command and confidence, he did not set aside the 'genuine Sikhs'. His mind was 'never prostrate before that of others'. He conferred the government of Multan on Sawan Mal who had no connection with either the Dogras or the Faqir Brothers, or Jamadar Khushal Singh. Hari Singh Nalwa was given the difficult but important command of Peshawar ; Desa Singh Majithia enjoyed the Maharaja's esteem and confidence as the governor of Amritsar.

If anything, the Maharaja in Cunningham's view, was most considerate of the feelings of his fellow Sikhs. He never arrogated to himself the title or powers of a despot. In talking of his government he always used the term 'Khalsa'. On his seal he wrote simply his name, with the prefix 'Akal Sahai', like any other Sikh of the times. 'He was assiduous in his devotions; he honoured men of reputed sanctity, and enabled them to practise an enlarged charity; he attributed every success to the favour of God, and he styled himself and the people collectively as the "Khalsa", or commonwealth of Gobind. Whether in walking barefoot to make his obeisance to a collateral representative of his prophets, or in rewarding a soldier distinguished by that symbol of his faith, a long and ample beard, or in restraining the excesses of the fanatical Akalis, or in beating an army and acquiring a province, his own name and his own motives were kept carefully concealed, and everything was done for the sake of the Guru, for the advantage of the Khalsa, and in the name of the Lord'.

Notwithstanding Cunningham's asides on polity and government, his chief interest, like the interest of his predecessors, was in past politics. His appendices too contain texts of treaties and figures of revenue and the army. But, unlike the assessment of his predecessors, his assessment of the Maharaja's administration was balanced and moderate : 'He took from the land as much as it could readily yield, and he took from merchants as much as they could profitably give ; he put down open marauding; the Sikh peasantry enjoyed a light assessment; no local officer dared to oppress a member of the Khalsa; and if elsewhere the farmers of revenue were resisted in their tyrannical proceedings, they were more likely to be changed than to be supported by battalions'.

For over forty years after the publication of Cunningham's work no British historian felt the urge to write on Maharaja Ranjit Singh. In the last decade of the nineteenth century, Lepel Griffin wrote his *Ranjit Singh*, not because of any personal interest in the subject, but as a volume in the 'Rulers of India' series undertaken by the British administrators of India as an imperialist venture, including monographs on Clive and Warren Hastings as well as Akbar and Aurangeeb. Griffin did not remain untouched by the high tide of imperialistic assumptions and attitudes. Talking of the administration of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, for example, Griffin observes that his evidence 'will suffice to point the moral to those in India and in England who try to persuade the world that the British rule is harsh and oppressive'. He goes on to add : 'Anarchy, famine and rapine have been replaced by orderly and just administration, under which every man enjoys his own in peace, none making him afraid. Where, out of twelve shillings' worth of produce, the Sikh Government took six from the peasant as rent, the British Government takes only two or one'.

Griffin grows lyrical not only about the achievement of the British in India but also in his denigration of their predecessors : 'If England were to withdraw her protecting hand, if she were to proclaim the *Pax Britannica* at an end and

retire from India in a cowardly denial of her duties and her rights, is there any one of knowledge who doubts that in a very short time anarchy would return once more ; that Sikhs, Marathas, and Afghans would again be fighting *a outrance ;* that the children would again be tossed on the sword and spear-points of invaders, and the Punjab maidens again become the prey of the ravisher, while the light of flaming villages would nightly illumine the ancient walls of Delhi and Lahore ?'

With these sentiments, it was a small thing for Griffin to justify British policies towards the successors of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The downfall of the Sikh monarchy in his opinion was chiefly due to the fact that the authority of the Maharaja 'drew no part of its strength from the inherent respect of the people for an ancient house'. His dynasty could survive only if his successors had inherited his character and ability. The hands of the British were clean in the matter of Sikh wars and in the annexation of the Punjab, 'forced unwillingly upon them by the fierce and uncontrolled passions of the Sikh chiefs and people'. The question of supremacy over Northern India 'must have occurred sooner or later'. It was fortunate both for England and the future of the Sikh people that 'the provocation and attack came from Lahore and not from Calcutta. In sum, the Lahore state eventually 'fell from inherent weakness, and not from any designs on it by the British Government'.

It may be safely suggested that Griffin's primary concern was not to understand the Maharaja or his times but to present a case on the basis of plausible evidence. The political career of Ranjit Singh is narrated in three chapters, the last three, of Griffin's book. He felt confident that, having earlier worked on the *Rajas* of the Punjab and the *Chiefs* of the Punjab, he did not have to look for any fresh evidence. In a chapter of 14 pages an outline of the 'early conquests' of the Maharaja is given in relation to the Sikh chiefs. To his relations with the British upto the Treaty of Amritsar is given a chapter of 15 pages. In retrospect, Griffin was inclined to think that

the Maharaja saved his cis-Satlej territories by his 'great sagacity and 'shrewdness' in making a show of war. It was only imperfectly known to the British at that time. In the last chapter, longer than the other two taken together, the 'later conquests' of Maharaja Ranjit Singh are outlined as his victories chiefly over his Muslim rivals and enemies. Griffin's comment on the whole of this poiitical process may be anticipated by now: the kingdom was founded in 'violence, treachery and blood'.

When, in the opening sentence of his book, Griffin tells us that there is no more notable and picturesque figure among the chiefs who rose to power on the ruins of the Mughal Empire than Maharaja Ranjit Singh, we may be sure that he did not mean it as a compliment. The Sikh monarchy was Napoleonic not only because of the brilliancy of its success but also because of the suddenness of its rise and the completeness of its overthrow. The bulk of Griffin's book is devoted nevertheless to aspects other than the politics of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. After the introductory first chapter, he takes up the position of the Sikhs under British rule, their population, its composition, distribution and numbers, underlining the importance of the Jats. The reason is not far to seek. Of the many warlike races subject to the Queen Empress, the Sikhs indisputably take the first place as thoroughly reliable, useful soldiers'. The backbone of the Sikh people were the Jats, 'by far the most important of all the Punjab races'. The British rulers of India would be wise to 'encourage and stimulate the military spirit of the Sikhs and employ them on active service on every opportunity, whether the campaign be in Europe, Asia, or Africa'.

Like J. D. Cunningham, Griffin pays a good deal of attention to Sikh theocracy, devoting a whole chapter to its discussion, but virtually to refute Cunningham. 'Maharaja Ranjit Singh was so completely a product of the Sikh theocracy', says Griffin, 'and so embodied the spirit of the Khalsa, that no account of his character and career would be complete with-

out a description of the religious system which had so powerful an effect upon the Jat cultivators of the Punjab in the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century'. Griffin refers to the translation of the *Adi Granth* by Ernest Trumpp for a fuller understanding, telling the reader that the accounts of Sikhism given by Cunningham and H. H. Wilson were 'slight and defective'. They were not acquainted with the Sikh scriptures. For Griffin, as for Trumpp, the pages of the *Adi Granth* were 'involved, incoherent and shallow'. In any case, they were not relevant for understanding Sikh theocracy. More important than the *Adi Granth* were the writings of Guru Gobind Singh for determining the military and political constitution of the Sikhs. Guru Gobind Singh was more inclined to polytheistic ideas than to the refined Pantheism of Guru Nanak; he abolished the custom of caste and promulgated a new faith with its own rules of conduct regarding dress, food and worship. He taught self-aggrandisement to his followers. A few customs were peculiar to the Jat Sikhs, relating to marriage and inheritance, and giving rise to the problem of succession and legitimacy. Sikh political activity and polity could be understood better in these terms. 'Ranjit Singh was merely the most successful among robber chiefs, *primus inter pares*'.

In a separate chapter on the state of Punjab at the time of Ranjit Singh's birth, Griffin outlines the development of the eighteenth century, largely in terms of *misls* or confederacies 'in which a number of robber chiefs agreed, after a somewhat democratic and equal fashion, to follow the flag and fight under the general orders of one powerful leader'. Of the six *misls* between the rivers Satlej and Indus, the Sukarchakia was more important only than the Nakkai; it was less important than the Ahluwalia, Bhangi, Kanhiya and the Ramgarhia. This supposed fact can be, and has been used to highlight Maharaja Ranjit Singh's achievement, but in the pages of Griffin it serves more to imply that he was an upstart.

The confederacies fought against each other more often than against the common enemy. All Sikhs were theoretically

equal, but in actual practice ·the law of force, the keen sword and the strong hand were the foundations upon which the Sikh society, as indeed every other powerful society in the world, was founded'. The enthusiasm of the Sikhs for their faith gave them a certain dignity, and to their objects and expeditions an almost national interest. But their depredations were not always directed against others. 'No man could consider his land, his horse, or his wife secure unless he was strong enough to defend them'.

Griffin noticed that even half a century after his death, Maharaja Ranjit Singh was 'a favourite subject' with the ivory painters of Amritsar and Delhi, by whom he was ordinarily represented in middle or old age. Baron Hugel's pen-portrait of the Maharaja was striking but unprepossessing. It described the Maharaja after he was worn down by his paralytic seizure in 1834. In his youth he was 'the *beau ideal* of a soldier, strong, spare, active, courageous, and enduring'. Even when he was feeble and paralysed his ascendancy over his brilliant court of fierce and turbulent chiefs was complete. He was endowed with some of the most important characteristics of greatness. But in respectable virtues he had no part. He was selfish, false and avaricious; grossly superstitious, shamelessly and openly drunken and debauched.

'Every age and people', says Griffin, 'have their own standard of virtue; and what is to-day held to be atrocious or disreputable may, one hundred years hence, be the fashion'. This, however, is not meant to mitigate the harshness of Griffin's judgment. 'Violence, fraud and rapacity were the very breath of the nostrils of every Sikh chief'. The Maharaja was very susceptible to feminine influence. Griffin does not miss the opportunity of dwelling on the notoriety of Maharani Jindan and the illegitimacy of Maharaja Dalip Singh in connection with the favourite women of the Maharaja. If Dalip Singh was not set aside in 1846, it was only because the British thought of the convenience of the *status quo*. A whole chapter of Griffin's book is devoted to the character

and personality of Maharaja Ranjit Singh to contrast the little good that was in him with the immensity of his foibles.

A chapter on the court of Maharaja Ranjit Singh is given on the assumption that a description of the courtiers would be more interesting to the reader than political activity and enable him to know what manner of a man was the Maharaja. His criterion for selecting his courtiers and servants was their competence and loyalty. They were allowed to squeeze the peasantry, provided they were not disloyal to the Maharaja. Not genuinely religious, he could afford to be liberal in employing Sayyids, Brahmans and Rajputs in preference to the Jats. 'Against the cultured intelligence of these races what had the poor Jat cultivator, as stupid as his own buffaloes, to oppose?' They could do no more than keep the plough straight, and fight. That was why the generals of the Maharaja were often Jats, while in council he gave preference to Brahmans, Rajputs, Khatris and Muhammadans: like the Faqir Brothers; Jamadar Khushal Singh and his nephew Tej Singh; the Rajas Gulab Singh, Dhian Singh, Suchait Singh and Hira Singh; Raja Dina Nath; Misar Ralia Ram and his son Sahib Dayal; Hari Singh Nalwa; Bhais Ram Singh, Gobind Ram and Gurmukh Singh.

In a chapter on the army and administration of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Griffin begins by saying that the military genius of the Maharaja was not so much shown in his generalship as in the skill with which he raised a powerful, disciplined and well equipped army, after realizing the superiority of the British military organization. The change was largely facilitated by the employment of European officers like General Ventura, Generel Allard, Colonel Court and General Avitabile, and a host of others. They were not entrusted with supreme command. The Punjabi generals too were very eminent, like Mohkam Chand, Diwan Chand, Fateh Singh Kalianwala, Nihal Singh Atariwala, Buddh Singh Sandhanwalia, his brother Atar Singh, and Hari Singh Nalwa. Griffin gives the figures of the army of Ranjit Singh, indicating numbers and expenditure for

its various categories, and the pay of the soldiers. He has little to say about the civil administration, which for him was a 'simple process of squeezing out of the unhappy peasant every rupee that he could be made to disgorge'. The only restraining factor was either the fear of revolt or the abandonment of cultivation. Custom duties were heavy, and the merchants were treated with utmost insolence and oppression. In support of his contention, Griffin simply quotes several extracts from the reports of the British settlement officers. The inclusion of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in the 'Rulers of India' series was intended at best to be a left-handed compliment. By yoking his interpretation to imperialistic purposes, Griffin made it worse than left-handed, not only for Maharaja Ranjit Singh but also for the whole Sikh movement and the Sikh people.

In singing the praises of *Pax Britannica,* Griffin had been outdone three years earlier by an Indian historian : Syad Muhammad Latif. Latif opens his Preface with the statement that there was no story at once so grand, so romantic, and so pregnant with instruction, as that of the British conquest of India and the progress of the British in the East. Furthermore, in no part of the Empire was British rule received with more genuine satisfaction than in the land of the five rivers. It was a change from a period of insecurity and spoliation to a period of profound and unbroken peace ; a wasteland full of thorns and brambles was changed into a verdant garden resplendent with bright and fragrant flowers. Latif appealed to the reason, the conscience and the good taste of his fellow countrymen to draw the right conclusion from his facts : 'Do not think that the Panjab of today is the Panjab of forty years back. Do not forget what the condition of your country was forty years ago, or to appreciate heartily the manifold blessings of British rule and the influence of British civilization on your country'.

Latif had no special prejudice against Maharaja Ranjit Singh. He did not have to have one. The history of the country even

under the Mughals was marked by corruption, degradation, treachery, confusion, disorder, desolation, vice, cruelty, extravagance, profligacy, voluptuousness, debauchery, pomp and folly. The age of Naushirwan, the just, and the age of Harun al-Rashid, the magnificent, were overshadowed by the *Pax Britannica*. Its cherished objective was 'to shelter God's people, to protect the weak, to punish the tyrant, to do away with the darkness of ignorance, to diffuse the light of learning, and to fulfil its great mission in the world, which is the good of the nations committed by God to its care'. Recounting its manifold blessings, Latif refers to the Victorian Age as unrivalled in the history of the world, and hopes that his countrymen will do their duty to their sovereign. He advises the young to fear God, love mankind, and honour the Empress, and to join him in the prayer 'Long live our Gracious Queen, the Empress of India' !

Nevertheless, Latif believed that a work of history should contain the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but truth. Like a true Victorian, he believed that it was possible to act on that motto; that facts spoke for themselves; and that the duty of the historian was to narrate facts in their true colour, 'no matter to what particular nation or creed they related'. We may readily concede that Latif wished to be 'objective' and 'impartial' as the cliches go. But this would not relieve us from analysing his work a little to understand its character.

Latif wrote his *History of the Panjab*, he tells us, to meet a need which had long been felt for a complete history of the Punjab. In the works of the British writers one could find the history only of the Sikhs, or of the Sikh period. There was nothing about the pre-Sikh, and the Hindu and pre-Hindu periods, just as there was nothing about the British period. Latif's complete history of the Punjab is divided into five parts : the early period, the Muhammadan period, the rise of the Sikhs, the life of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and, lastly, the period following the death of the Maharaja, including the British period. In attempting a 'full life' of Maharaja Ranjit

Singh, Latif also felt that it was 'a fuller account of his interesting reign than has ever yet been published'. Indeed, he devotes about 150 large pages to the subject, amply supporting his statement.

True to his motto, Latif appears to relate almost all the facts known to him, accepting them on the authority of his predecessors. Quite consciously, he does not give references to his facts 'in every instance'. He gives footnotes sparingly, and chiefly to point out his difference of opinion with others. From the list of 'authorities' given for the Sikh period in the Preface, it can be inferred that he made use of the works of Prinsep, M'Gregor, Smyth, Cunningham, Lepel Griffin's *Rajas* and *Chiefs* of the Punjab and the accounts of Moorcroft, Burnes, Jacquemont and Masson. The *Umdat ut-Tawarikh* of Sohan Lal, thought Latif, was a useful work of reference, but it was difficult to use, being 'loaded with fiction' in a hyperbolic style. The History by Kanhiya Lal in Urdu 'contains little that is original'. If Latif used any other 'authorities', he does not tell us. He leaned heavily on British writers and European travellers for his facts.

Except in the last three paragraphs on the character of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Latif avoids generalization, and even as ides and reflections. The snag lies nonetheless in his assumption that facts speak for themselves, that they are available in a ready made form shorn of all interpretation. For instance, the sexual conduct of Ranjit Singh's mother is retailed by Latif in a considerable detail on the basis of his 'authorities'. The import is clear enough, though the author may stick to his belief that he is narrating merely facts. Opinions and judgments have a devious way of entering the language used by historians. Latif may not even be conscious sometimes of borrowing the opinions of his predecessors in his narration of facts. Occasionally, however, he can even reword the judgment of others. For instance, in his 'pursuit of ambition or pleasure' Ranjit Singh was indifferent alike to the pledges of friendship and to the ties of blood or affection. This comes

straight from Prinsep. In fact, it is possible to trace all the statements made by Latif on the character of Maharaja Ranjit Singh to one or another of his 'authorities'. What he had thrown out of the door of his commitment to Clio who loved truth, the whole truth and nothing but truth, he re-introduced through the window of his naive methodology. On the whole, his work would support Griffin rather than Cunningham in its narration of past politics. And he talks of nothing else.

The character of historical writing on Maharaja Ranjit Singh began to change in the last quarter of British rule in India. Notwithstanding its title, G.L. Chopra's *The Panjab as a Sovereign State,* published for the first time in 1928, is a study of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. It was originally presented to the University of London as a doctoral thesis. Its scope is wider than that of any other work published before; and it is based on a wider range and variety of evidence. Apart from a large number of appendices and maps, and the conclusion, there are five chapters in this book. The first deals with events leading to the unification of the Punjab under Maharaja Ranjit Singh, though it includes the conquest of Kashmir and the trans-Indus territories as well. The relations of the Maharaja with the Afghans and the East India Company are studied systematically in a separate chapter, and so is the army of the Punjab. A whole chapter is given to civil administration, and another to the court and camp of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The sources used include the Persian works of Sohan Lal, Mufti Aliuddin, Butay Shah and Khushwaqt Rai; official correspondence of the British Agents at Ludhiana and Ambala; accounts of European and Indian travellers; publications of the officials of the East India Company, including the works of the historians; and the published works of British administrators who wrote after the annexation of the Punjab.

While it is true that G. L. Chopra's framework could, and actually did, come from the work of his British predecessors, it is also true that no British historian had studied the aspects

covered by Chopra equally methodically as themes worthy of serious attention. It may not be too much to maintain in fact that whereas much of the interest of the early British historians was inspired by practical considerations, much of Chopra's interest is inspired by academic considerations, that is, by a genuine desire to understand the past in its own terms first. In the political process, for instance, Chopra discerns three clear phases : upto 1809, the Maharaja concentrated on the conquest of the central Punjab, merely levying tribute from the outlying areas ; then, with the eastern boundary of his kingdom fixed at the Satlej, he conquered most of those territories which had been tributary in the earlier phase ; from 1824 till his death, the Maharaja secured his western frontier by occupying the Peshawar valley and other trans-Indus territories. Not that we have to agree with Chopra, but we can certainly see the attempt at rational understanding. He is not reluctant to generalize either. Maharaja Ranjit Singh 'brought the scattered people of the Punjab under a uniform and consistent system of government ; and thereby evolved a young and vigorous nation. Herein lies the real justification, if this be at all necessary, for that policy of "blood and iron" which Ranjit Singh followed to achieve his end'. We may hear a faint echo of Cunningham. But, instead of the Sikh nation, Chopra is talking of Punjabi nationality.

For further elucidation, more examples may be given. Maharaja Ranjit Singh reversed the tide against the Afghans with the help of his well organized and efficient army, no doubt, but this was made easier by the internal strife in Afghanistan. In Chopra's analysis, Maharaja Ranjit Singh's policy towards the British was not the result merely of trust and good will; the superiority of British power also entered into consideration. If his fears were partially allayed in the 1820s, they were revived in the early 1830s. Though he signed the commercial treaty in 1832, he never waived his claim over Shikarpur, or his right to intervene in the affairs of Sindh. In the last three years of his reign the Maharaja 'showed a marked disposition towards pursuing an independent line of

action, irrespective of English interests and good-will'. In this he was supported by several of his ministers. Dhian Singh was only one of them. The reluctance of the rank and file of his army to perform their part in Afghanistan may be better understood in this light. Chopra has not said the last word. No historian ever does. But the point about his serious attempt to understand the past in academic terms is perhaps sufficiently made.

In discussing the army of Ranjit Singh, Chopra takes into account the considerations which impelled the Maharaja to raise a strong and efficient army, apart from his natural inclination for military affairs. The kingdom which he had created with the help of his army could be maintained with the help of the army alone in the last resort. His dominions were surrounded by the Afghans and the English, and he needed a strong army against both. That was why Ranjit Singh 'made the progressive consolidation of his forces the central aim of his policy'. The background of the traditional organization of Sikh armies, the beginning of disciplined and trained infantry, the raising of regular army in all the three branches of infantry, cavalry and artillery, the retention of irregular forces and the *jagirdari* troops, recruitment and pay, equipment and statistics are given briefly but lucidly before coming to a general assessment that in some ways the achievement of the Maharaja was unique in India. The Maharaja made no innovations in the civil administration of his dominions, but he tried to improve the familiar arrangements. Chopra discusses the administrative organization of the state and its revenue system more elaborately than any earlier historian. He draws attention to the existence of judicial administration under the Maharaja and discusses the general character of his government in the light of his findings. This chapter may be regarded as rather weak in retrospect, but Chopra started an earnest discussion of the Maharaja's government and administration.

Taking his cue from Griffin, Chopra discusses the court and camp of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, in slightly different terms, though not exactly in terms of a ruling class. Talking of the

leading personalities he takes into account their importance and representative position. They are divided into six groups : Rajputs, Sikhs, Hindus, Brahmans, Muslims and Europeans. They did not form a homogenious body, representing various creeds, diverse races and different traditions. The Sikh group alone was wholly composed of the old natives of the Punjab. But even in the regular forces they were seldom given the highest positions. The diverse composition of the court could hardly secure 'any identity of interests or oneness of aim'. The courtiers were more keen on pursuing their own interests than serving the state with selfless devotion. However, they were a source of strength as well as weakness. Most of them worked loyally and efficiently out of self-interest. There was no danger of organized opposition to the Maharaja. In their willing obedience to the Maharaja they were prompted by ties of personal devotion and by the irresistible might of his power and prestige.

In his assessment of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Chopra does not ignore 'unpleasant' facts, but he tries to minimize them. We should keep in mind, Chopra says, 'the circumstances of the age in which he was born, and the social and domestic environments in which he was brought up'. Most of the time Chopra is modifying the views expressed by the British writers. Considering the social and political condition of the country over which he ruled, the government of Maharaja Ranjit Singh was 'surprisingly mild and merciful'. He gave to his subjects a more consistent and uniform system of administration and a greater amount of peace and prosperity than they had enjoyed for over a century. Above all, he transformed the Sikhs, numbering only half a million, into the strongest nation in India. Before him, the Punjab was merely a geographical expression. During his reign, the various and diverse communities of the Punjab were welded into a well-ordered state. More subtle and fundamental causes were at work against the independence of the Punjab than merely the relative lack of political genius in Ranjit Singh's successors.

G. L. Chopra was not alone in seeking a new interpretation of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and his times. There was a rival historian : N. K. Sinha. He gave the simple title of *Ranjit Singh* to his work, first published in 1933. It contains no reference to G. L. Chopra's book. It covers practically the same ground and is based largely on the same sources, though with a greater reliance on sources in English and a lesser use of Persian sources. Three of its chapters are given to conquest and consolidation, one each to Maharaja Ranjit Singh's relations with the Afghans and the British, one each to his problem in the north-western frontier and his relations with other Indian states, and one each to his government, army and court before Sinha comes to a general assessment of the Maharaja.

Like G. L. Chopra, N. K. Sinha is not prepared to accept his British predecessors as his 'authorities'. But, unlike Chopra, he is deeply influenced by one of them, namely J. D. Cunningham. In theory, and to some extent in practice, Maharaja Ranjit Singh in Sinha's view was not the supreme embodiment of all authority. One great limitation was imposed on him by the living principle of a commonwealth. Some check was imposed also by the Akalis, by the martial nobility and even by the common people possessed of arms. In any case, the theocratic commonwealth or the Khalsa of which each individual Sikh considered himself as a member was 'a potent force' to which the Maharaja 'always showed due deference'. He regarded himself as merely 'a drum of the Khalsa' for the assertion of their political supremacy. He might have been absolute, but he always acted in the name of the Khalsa. 'He did not assume the title of King, but rather the impersonal designation of *Sarkar* to denote the source of orders. In referring to his government he always used the term *Khalsa ji* or *Sarkar Khalsa*. On his seal he had the inscription "God the helper of Ranjit". These ideas are clearly borrowed from J. D. Cunningham.

Sinha looked upon Maharaja Ranjit Singh from the standpoint of Indian nationalism. The Maharaja secured the support

of all his people — Sikh, Hindu and Muslim; and he secured the frontiers against the Afghans. In fact, 'if the disorganized misls had retained their hold over the Punjab, at least the North-Western Frontier region and Kashmir would have become a part of Afghanistan under the Barakzais'. Sinha expresses the view that the administration of the Maharaja was over-centralized. He is critical of the Maharaja on some other points also. But his is a minor criticism. One great cause of Ranjit Singh's failure was his relations with the British. In the Anglo-Sikh alliance, the British government was the rider and Ranjit Singh was the horse. A collision between the military monarchy of Lahore and British imperialism was inevitable. 'Perhaps with the solicitude inherent in all builders he feared to expose the kingdom he had created to the risks of war and chose the policy of yielding, yielding and yielding'. Many others after Sinha have wished that Ranjit Singh had fought the British in his lifetime, but without subscribing to Sinha's view that Ranjit Singh's failure was inherent in the logic of his historical situation. For Sinha, 'all causes that were not the cause of Rome were destined to be lost'.

In 1939, at the time of the first death centenary of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, a volume of articles was published by Khalsa College, Amritsar. The aspects covered in this volume are a fair indication of the expanding scope of studies on Maharaja Ranjit Singh and his times : the late eighteenth century background, the political activity of Ranjit Singh, relations with the English and the Afghans, north-western frontier policy, military organization, civil administration, taxation system, agriculture and the general assessment of his achievement and character. But the contributors to this volume did not pursue their interest in the Maharaja or his times any further.

However, there was one notable exception : Sita Ram Kohli. He had started taking interest in the kingdom of Lahore before G.L. Chopra and N.K. Sinha produced their doctoral theses, and Kohli's interest lasted virtually till his death in 1962. Also,

Sita Ram Kohli started his scholarly career by a greater reliance on indigenous rather than foreign sources of information. He went through the entire record of the Khalsa Darbar, and tried to combine the information available in Persian and Punjabi sources with the accounts of European writers. The army and revenue administration of Maharaja Ranjit Singh attracted his early interest, which is reflected in his fuller study of the Maharaja published in Punjabi in 1951. Besides a posthumously published volume on the successors of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Sita Ram Kohli left behind a translation and text of over 400 orders issued by the Maharaja in a single year. Concentrating on the neglected aspects of the history of the Punjab during the early nineteenth century, and basing himself primarily on extremely useful and unutilized or under-utilized sources of information, Sita Ram Kohli has set a standard of historical scholarship which is not easy to emulate, and which is hard to excel. What is more, he paved the way for a new generation of historians.

In the historical literature of the past forty years, which is well known to the students of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and his times, we may notice briefly the works in which substantial additions are made to our knowledge of the subject. The interest shown by G. L. Chopra, N. K. Sinha and Sita Ram Kohli in the military organization of Maharaja Ranjit Singh has been carried forward by Professor Fauja Singh in his *Military System of the Sikhs*. The bulk of this exhaustive study of the subject is devoted to Maharaja Ranjit Singh, though the scope of this work is not confined to the reign of the Maharaja. Apart from the background of the 18th century, Professor Fauja Singh has studied in detail the growth and development of the army of the Maharaja : its constitution, recruitment and composition; pay and allowances, camping, transportation, supplies and equipment; arms, ammunition and training; tactics and strategy. One can immediately see that our knowledge of the military organization of Maharaja Ranjit Singh becomes much fuller than what we had in all the earlier works put together.

In another direction also, our knowledge of the period has become much wider than what can be gathered from the works of G. L. Chopra, N. K. Sinha and Sita Ram Kohli. This is in relation to administration, polity and agrarian structure of the Punjab during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The work in question is the *Agrarian System of the Sikhs* by Dr Indu Banga. Like Professor Fauja Singh's work, the scope of the *Agrarian System* is not confined to the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, but the bulk of this work too relates to his reign. Apart from the 18th-century background and the broad political developments of the reign of the Maharaja, separate chapters are devoted to the vassal chiefs of the Maharaja, the administrative units and functionaries of his kingdom, land revenue, the *jagirdars*, grants given by way of *dharmarth* and land tenures. On the whole, thus, the *Agrarian System of the Sikhs* elucidates much of the socio-economic structure of the early nineteenth century Punjab, particularly the position of the ruling class and the peasantry, and the polity and administration of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

One more aspect of the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh is covered by writers who are not professional historians, namely painting. W. G. Archer's *Paintings of the Sikhs* is quite comprehensive though not an exhaustive presentation of the art of painting during the period of Sikh rule, including the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Like most of the art historians, Archer has not gone into details of the historical situation in which the art of painting developed. But, as a pioneer, he has done a great service to the historians by bringing to their notice this neglected aspect of the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The study of art adds altogether a new dimension to our understanding of any period. Art is also a very useful form of historical evidence. The importance of Archer's work is obvious enough. He has been joined recently by another art historian, Faqir Syed Aijaz-ud-din, who belongs to the family of the famous Faqir Brothers who served Maharaja Ranjit Singh with distinction.

In no account of historical writing on Maharaja Ranjit Singh can we ignore two non-professional but popular historians : Fakir Syed Waheed-ud-din, another member of the Faqir family, and Sardar Khushwant Singh. *The Real Ranjit Singh* by Fakir Syed Waheed-ud-din is not based on any elaborate research. Written with 'affection and admiration', this book tries to recapture the Maharaja as he figured in the imagination of his subjects, and their descendants, larger than life as the author puts it. A professional historian may not like to write a book like this, but he cannot afford not to read it. Sardar Khushwant Singh's *Ranjit Singh : Maharaja of the Punjab* is more historical in treatment and is grounded on much larger empirical evidence. In fact, each one of his statements can be traced to one or another of his predecessors, or even original source materials, including occasionally, the *Umdat ut-Tawarikh*. Though a few paragraphs are devoted here and there to the army, government, administration and justice, the work of Sardar Khushwant Singh is professedly biographical, to conjure up a living ruler and human being. The biographical form does not lend itself to any deep understanding of the period as a whole, but the reader of Sardar Khushwant Singh's book is amply compensated by useful insights, besides enjoying a fascinating narrative.

Popular works should be welcome even as partial propagators of historical knowledge gained through systematic research by professionals. It is gratifying to note that serious work continues to be done on the Maharaja and his times, irrespective of centenaries. In order to understand Maharaja Ranjit Singh it is necessary to study him in dialectical relationship to the society in which he lived, and which he partly shaped and moulded.

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Contemporaneous English Historical Writing

Gianeshwar Khurana*

The British writers writing in the time of Maharaja Ranjit Singh were not trained in the rigours of historical discipline. Some of them were just travellers, and some others were servants of the East India Company, doing their routine duties but feeling an urge to produce a sketch, a journal or an historical work in their spare time. Motives behind historical writing differed from person to person, and they were often mixed, ranging from intellectual curiosity to idle fancy or self-interest in practical, political or even personal terms.

English historical writing on the Sikhs resulted primarily from the British interest in the rise and growth of the Sikh political power. Initial attempts in this direction were made by Polier, Browne and Forster. Their inquiries were chiefly directed towards discovering the secret of the strength of the Sikhs. None of these writers could comprehend the nature of the reform of Guru Nanak, nor could they grasp the socio-political structure of the *misls*. But they were quick to perceive the unlimited potentiality of the Sikhs, though they were not unanimous about the extent to which the Sikhs might be formidable or the direction which their energies might take.

John Malcolm took up the thread from his predecessors in the first decade of the nineteenth century. The British, as a result of their occupation of Delhi, had come to be the immediate neighbours of the Sikhs. Whereas George Forster had visualized the rise of a strong man in the Punjab in the

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1780s, John Malcolm did not accept this proposition even in 1808 when Ranjit Singh was well set on his way to glory.[1] The green finger of Forster proved to be more perceptive than the maturer analysis of Malcolm. The rise of Ranjit Singh gave a new character to British historiography. Changes in the social and political situation were reflected in the work of Prinsep.

Henry Thoby Prinsep was employed as a Secretary to the Governor General and had the advantage of having a free access to all official documents. He was also present in the famous meeting held between William Bentinck and Ranjit Singh at Ropar in October 1831. He was struck by the friendly attitude of the Maharaja but could not have that type of personal rapport with Ranjit Singh which W.G. Osborne, the author of the *Court and Camp of Runjeet Singh,* could establish. Moreover, Prinsep composed his *Origin of the Sikh Power in the Punjab and the Political Life of Maharaja Ranjit Singh* primarily from the report prepared by Captain William Murray, the Political Agent at Ambala.

Though not seriously interested in the squabbles and petty euds of the Sikh *misls,* Prinsep attempted to define the nature of these organizations. According to him, the *misls* were 'confederacies of equals, under chiefs of their own selection'.[2] This has been subsequently repeated by many a British and Indian historian as an unquestionable assumption.

The career and achievement of Ranjit Singh form the core of Prinsep's work. That was why the work when first published was popularly known as the "Life of Runjeet Singh".[3] Prinsep

1 George Forster, *A Journey from Bengal to England.* Punjab Languages Department, Patiala 1970 (reprint—first published 1798), I, 340.

2 H.T. Prinsep, *Origin of the Sikh Power in the Punjab and Political Life of Maharaja Ranjit Singh,* Punjab Languages Department, Patiala 1970 (reprint—first published 1834), 23.

3 Henry Lawrence, *Adventures of an Officer in the Punjab,* Punjab Languages Department, Patiala 1970 (reprint—first published 1846), I, 15. J.D. Cunningham describes the book as 'Murray's Ranjit Singh by Prinsep'. In subsequent references he only writes 'Murray, Ranjit Singh' : *A History of the Sikhs.* S. Chand & Co., Delhi 1972 (rev ed—first published 1849), 85.

did not perceive 'any constitution or fixed form of government' in Ranjit Singh's kingdom. On the authority of Murray, he estimated the total revenue of Ranjit Singh at 2,58,09,500 rupees a year and gave the number of his troops, horse and foot as 82,014 in 1830.[4] Prinsep was highly critical of Ranjit Singh's administration, particularly of his treatment of the deposed rulers and their dependents.[5] Despite his criticism of Ranjit Singh, Prinsep was not oblivious of his achievement.

> Ranjit Singh has, in the formation especially of his military force, evinced the same enquiring activities, the same attention to minutiae, and perseverance in watching the execution of his plans, which characterized the first Peter of Russia; and, compared with all that we see and hear of other chiefs who have raised themselves to high dominion, he ranks amongst those, whose means have been the least exceptionable, his career being stained by no bloody executions, and by much fewer crimes than are chargeable against most founders of dynasties.[6]

Prinsep appreciated the gain which Ranjit Singh had made on the north-western frontier, and the sagacity with which he had reconciled the 'brave and bigotted' Muhammadans to his sway. Prinsep also noted with appreciation that 'there is no ferocity in his disposition, and he has never taken life, even under circumstances of aggravated offence'.[7]

Prinsep had little appreciation of the Sikh troops. He dwells on the routing of the Akalis by Metcalfe's small escort as a significant event. He is assiduous in giving detail of Ranjit Singh's retreat during the Kashmir expedition in which he lost all his baggage. Prinsep often tries to undermine the success of the Sikhs, whereas for their adversaries, he never ceased to

4 Prinsep, *Origin of the Sikh Power*, 146-47.

5 Ibid, 142.

6 Ibid, 148.

7 Ibid, 143.

offer an apology. The defeat of Dost Muhammad at the hands of the Sikhs in July 1813, is attributed to the strong hot wind which blew dust into the faces of the Afghans. Describing Diwan Mohkam Chand's expedition of Kashmir, Prinsep writes that 'Dost Muhammad now attacked with his horse, and the Sikhs were sinking before him, when the Diwan in person on his elephant carried two guns which discharging grapes checked the Afghans'. In the same vein Prinsep attributes the success of the Sikhs in capturing Multan to the deficient means of the garrison and the unauthorised assault of 'Akali Sadhu Singh' and his followers.

Prinsep's understanding of Ranjit Singh's position has interesting implications for British policy towards the Maharaja. According to Prinsep, though Ranjit Singh had always shown himself personally brave, his plans betrayed 'no boldness or adventurous hazard'.[8] Thus, it could be safely concluded that Ranjit Singh would not venture to pick up any quarrel with the British that might embroil his kingdom into a war and threaten its existence. Prinsep also underlined that the kingdom of Ranjit Singh consisted of the diverse atoms, and it was in his interest to profess friendship with the British to keep his rivals in check.

Ranjit Singh died in June 1839 and with it cracked the mighty structure which he had so assiduously built and maintained. The decade between Ranjit Singh's death and the annexation of the Punjab was characterised by anxiety and uncertainty. The period is also chaotic in the sense that a lot of propaganda and journalistic literature passed under the name of history. The writers often had a point of view to uphold, and believed that the best mode of authenticating that point of view was to derive support from history. Ranjit Singh was now relegated to the background and was quite often praised or debunked as it suited the author's thesis on the contemporary situation.

The idea of eventual annexation of the Punjab to the British Empire had been there in the minds of the Europeans

[8] Prinsep, *Origin of the Sikh Power* 142.

even during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Jacquemont had felt convinced that 'some day or other (though not for many years to come) the Company may move the bounds of its empire from Sutlej to the Indus'.[9] Osborne had suggested that the East India Company should occupy the Punjab after the death of Ranjit Singh. However, the first work on the history of the Punjab with an all out plea for annexation came not from an English official but a German adventurer in the service of Ranjit Singh: Steinbach. He had not only suffered humiliation at the hands of his own troops in the post-Ranjit Singh days, but also lost his job with the Lahore Darbar in 1844 and sought employment with Raja Gulab Singh.

Steinbach's book, *The Punjaub*, is designed like a gazetteer, containing information on the topography and the socio-political conditions of the Punjab. He limited the scope of his work to 'the events more immediately connected with the state of disruption following upon the death of Runjeet Singh'.[10] But he touched upon the earlier period with a view to providing the necessary background. Steinbach, like Prinsep, attributed the rise of the Sikhs as a political power to 'the desperate state of poverty to which a series of exactions on the part of the government had reduced the Sikh landholders'. He also borrowed the view of Prinsep that the cultivators proclaimed 'the tenets of Govind Singh as a bond of union and excitement against their oppressors'.[11] Once the common danger was over and the Sikhs were the master of their own land, they took to quarrelling among themselves. The end of the *misls* became inevitable. Ranjit Singh emerged as the 'sole ruler of the entire Punjaub' by 'gradual aggrandizement'.[12]

Steinbach gave no systematic account of Ranjit Singh, and

[9] Jacquemont, *Letters from India*, Edward Churton, London 1834, I, 232.

[10] Steinbach, *The Punjaub*, Punjab Languages Department, Patiala 1970 (reprint — first published 1883), 9.

[11] Ibid, 10; Prinsep, *Origin of the Sikh Power*, 2. See also, *Asrar-i-Samadi* (Pbi. tr), 8.

[12] Steinbach, *The Punjaub*, 14.

all that he recorded was not based on his own observation. Occasionally, however, he used fresh information. The account of the interview between Auckland and the Maharaja on 29 November 1838 at Ferozepur, for instance, was taken by Steinbach from Stocqueler's *Memorials of Afghanistan.* From Steinbach's work Ranjit Singh emerges as one of the richest monarchs of his times, though flourishing solely on his ill-gotten wealth. Every pearl in the royal treasury appeared to have been coined out of the blood of the peasantry. Ranjit Singh is painted as extremely ambitious, licentious and superstitious. But he was respectful towards all religions and towards men professing to be religious.

Steinbach is more detailed in his treatment of the post-Ranjit Singh period. However, his intention was neither to lay a faithful description before his contemporaries nor to preserve an eye-witness account for posterity. The entire account was aimed at convincing the British nation, with which the author completely identified himself, that 'successions of violent changes destroy all hope of permanent government in the Punjaub'.[13] The British seemed to have already resolved that 'we must not have a Muhammadan power on this side of the Attock. The Rajpoots of the hills could not hold the Punjab, and if it can't be Sikh, it must, I suppose be British'.[14]

W. L. M'Gregor's *History of the Sikhs* appeared after the first Anglo-Sikh War as the first detailed work on the subject by a single individual. M'Gregor had been a surgeon in the British army and had attended on Ranjit Singh in 1835-37. He had participated in the first Anglo-Sikh War. He was deeply disgusted with the British conduct of the war and expressed his opinion in no uncertain terms. He stood for complete prostration of the Punjab after the war and regretted that the British troops were not allowed to plunder Lahore and Amritsar after the war.

[13] Steinbach, *The Punjaub*, 41.

[14] F. Currie to Broadfoot (Private), 19 January 1845, in B.J. Hasrat (ed), *The Punjab Papers*, VVRI Hoshiarpur 1970, 81.

M'Gregor's contribution to the study of Maharaja Ranjit Singh consists of a paper written by him in 1838 which he incorporated in his book. Of all the contemporary British historians of Ranjit Singh M'Gregor had the benefit of the longest stay at the Lahore Darbar.

He had received favours from Ranjit Singh.[15] His account of the Maharaja is tinctured with sympathy. According to him :

> Many erroneous reports are in circulation regarding Runjeet, and it is but just, on the part of one who had experienced some degree of kindness and attention from him to place his character in its true light.[16]

M'Gregor's sympathatic understanding of the Maharaja stemmed from a sense of personal gratitude. He was not against annexation after the death of the Maharaja. He advocated the establishment of a large cantonment at Ferozepur so that the British could effectively decide the fate of the Punjab on the death of Ranjit Singh.

M'Gregor felt the 'fire and brilliancy' of Ranjit Singh's single eye and found him possessed of 'reasoning powers and discriminating acumen' of the highest order.[17] Ranjit Singh was 'ever the foremost in battle, and the last in retreat....His time has been too much occupied with military matters to allow him devoting any portion of it to literary pursuits'. M'Gregor recorded some of the questions asked by the Maharaja to give the feel of his extraordinary mind. Ranjit Singh took interest in the smallest detail of the administration.

> The manner in which Runjeet retains his conquests entire, displays the energy of the man in even a stronger light than all his victories in the field

15 For detail of the presents bestowed on M'Gregor, see Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar III (tr V. S. Suri), S. Chand & Co., Delhi, 1961, 247-48.

16 M'Gregor, *The History of the Sikhs*, Punjab Languages Department, Patiala 1970 (reprint — first published 1846), I, 262.

17 Ibid, 215.

> of battle, and without knowing the habits and endless resources of this extraordinary individual, it appears difficult to conceive how he manages to preserve such order in his wide-extended dominions; but we cease to wonder, as my friend Fukeer Azeezoodeen has often remarked, on witnessing the minute attention which he bestows on the most trifling subject, from the shoeing of a horse, to the organization of an army.[18]

The Maharaja was always willing to listen to his subordinates and even offered to change his orders if found injurious to the people.[19]

On Maharaja Ranjit Singh's attitude towards the English, M'Gregor largely followed the views of C.M. Wade. For example, M'Gregor observed that the Maharaja dreaded the power of the British ever since 1805 but 'if his honour or that of his Kingdom were compromised, he would try the issue'. M'Gregor dwells on the efforts made by Captain Wade to maintain friendly relations with Ranjit Singh and the healthy effect on Anglo-Sikh relations of the meeting between William Bentinck and Ranjit Singh, closing the first volume of his work with the remark that 'among all the princes of the East there were none who ever preserved their alliance with greater care than Runjeet Singh'.[20]

The only British author who tried to trace the origin of the family of Ranjit Singh from the days of Guru Nanak was Carmichael Smyth. However, in doing so his aim was not to establish it as a family of standing but to discredit the reigning family in the eyes of his contemporaries. For describing all types of gossip and scandal pertaining to the family of Ranjit Singh, Smyth relied on a journal kept by Alexander Gardner,

18 M'Gregor, *History of the Sikhs* I, 226.

19 This is proved by a *farman* of Ranjit Singh issued to Faqir Nuruddin. For a facsimile of the *farman* see Fakir Waheed-ud-din, *The Real Ranjit Singh*, Oriental Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi 1976 (reprint), 31-32.

20 M'Gregor, *History of the Sikhs*, II, 291.

a Captain in the Sikh Artillery from 1831 to 1846. Smyth's intention was to show that there was no justification for the continuation of the kingdom of Lahore after the death of Nau Nihal Singh, the last legitimate successor of Ranjit Singh.

Smyth gave no detail of the reign of Ranjit Singh, but his work contains an interesting account of the occupation of Lahore. Smyth does not subscribe to the view put forward by Prinsep that Ranjit Singh got Lahore in grant from the Afghan prince Zaman Shah by 'an opportune service'.[21] According to him Ranjit Singh captured Lahore with the help of influential Muslims who had fallen out with the Khatris and Brahmans of Lahore backed by Chait Singh Bhangi. It was in order to wreak 'vengeance' upon their opponents that they invited Ranjit Singh and his mother-in-law, Sada Kaur.[22] The fact that Muslims could look up to Ranjit Singh for protection against his own co-religionists places his character in a favourable light, something which Smyth never intended.

Smyth appended to his work some information on the socio-economic geography of the Punjab. He estimated the total population of the Punjab at 53,50,000 in 1845. In his estimate the entire armed population of the country did not exceed 1,50,000. He fixed the number of Sikh armies at 67,000 and also gave an abstract showing the disposition of the Sikh army in July 1844. Smyth believed that Ranjit Singh had created 'a force such as no eastern power had ever before possessed' in the hope of being 'able to battle with the British for the sovereignty of Hindostan' at an opportune moment.[23]

Smyth had an opportunity of participating in the first Anglo-Sikh War. He questioned the official assertion that the Sikhs had virtually forced the war on the British. Smyth was of the opinion that the British had first departed from the 'rules of

21 Prinsep, *Origin of the Sikh Power*, 41.

22 G. Charmichael Smyth, *A History of the Reigning Family of Lahore with some account of the Jammu Rajas*, Punjab Languages Department, Patiala 1970 (reprint — first published 1847), 16-17.

23 Ibid, 22.

friendship' and gave specific instances to prove his point. He was 'neither of opinion, that the Seiks made an *unprovoked attack,* nor that we have acted towards them with *great forbearance*'.[24] He ridiculed the Sikh commanders Lal Singh and Tej Singh for their treacherous conduct.

These observations of Smyth created a flutter. The book was severely criticised by Henry Lawrence;[25] and Smyth returned an equally emphatic reply.[26] The book was widely noticed.[27] The author ended up by earning a reprimand.[28] All that Smyth had said was not true, but he did try to question the official version.

The last great contemporary of Ranjit Singh who wrote a detailed history of the Sikhs was Joseph Davey Cunningham, the Political Agent at Bhopal. He had served as Assistant to the Political Agent at Ludhiana in 1837 and was present at the interview between Auckland and Ranjit Singh at Ferozepur in 1838. He had the opportunity of a personal interview with Ranjit Singh and formed a high opinion of the Maharaja. He saw in the kingdom of Ranjit Singh the fulfilment of the work of Guru Nanak and Gobind Singh.

> Ranjit Singh laboured, with more or less of intelligent design, to give unity and coherence to diverse atoms and scattered elements, to mould the increasing Sikh nation into a well-ordered state or common wealth, as Gobind had developed a sect into a people, and had

24 Carmichael Smyth, *History of Reigning Family of Lahore*, xvi. This is also supported by Cunningham, *History of the Sikhs*, 253, and by George Campbell, *Memoirs of My Indian Career*, London 1893, I, 73 & 77. See also, Ganda Singh (ed), *Private Correspondence Relating to the Anglo-Sikh Wars*, Sikh History Society, Amritsar 1955, 71-79.

25 *Calcutta Review*, IX (1848), 511. For Henry Lawrence's authorship of this review, see *Classified Subject Index to Calcutta Review, 1844-1920*, Calcutta 1974, 209.

26 Carmichael Smyth, *The Calcutta Periodical Playcarded* — The Reviewer Reviewed, Agra 1848.

27 *The Times*, 6 April 1849, 7, Col. 1.

28 Hobhouse to Dalhousie, P.S. 29 April 1849 to 21 April 1849, in Hasrat, *Punjab Papers*, 232-34.

> given application and purpose to the general institutions of Nanak.[29]

Cunningham was fully alive to the contradiction in the democratic tradition of Sikhism and the apparently despotic government of Ranjit Singh. He tried to explain it: Ranjit Singh 'appeared to be an absolute monarch in the midst of willing and obedient subjects. But he knew that he merely directed into a particular channel a power which he could neither destroy nor control'.[30]

Cunningham examined the civil administration in the Punjab and came to the conclusion that Ranjit Singh could secure the life and property of his subjects, leaving sufficient scope to individual ambition. Any system beyond it 'neither suited the Maharaja's genius nor that of the Sikh nation'. Cunningham also pointed out the short-comings of Ranjit Singh and the limitations of his work. He found Ranjit Singh guilty of favouring men like Khushal Singh and Dhian Singh, but also observed that his mind was 'never prostrate before that of others'.[31]

Cunningham was not happy with the state of Anglo-Sikh relations. According to him the Sikhs deserved immunity from overwhelming external pressure of the British because, though barbarous and ignorant, the Sikhs were in a 'state of progression'. Cunningham failed to stall the annexation of the Punjab. In the process he lost his own political employment but gave a hitherto unknown height to British historiography on the Sikhs.

British historiography on Ranjit Singh and his times was, by and large, animated by pragmatic consideration. The authors were either military officials or civil administrators and, for the most part, their writings aimed at influencing the course of British policy towards the Sikhs. This tendency became far more pronounced during the post-Ranjit Singh period.

[29] Cunningham, *History of the Sikhs*, 120.

[30] Ibid, 151.

[31] Ibid, 161.

Steinbach, though not an Englishman by birth, identified himself with the English and their cause for the immediate annexation of the Punjab. M'Gregor was keen to use his work as a garland and a whip, paying tribute to the gallant English and lashing out at the errant authorities. He was convinced that the Sikhs could never be reconciled to British sway and their complete prostration was a pre-requisite for the continuance of British influence. Smyth's work, by and large, aimed at discrediting the royal family of Lahore as a prelude to its extinction. Cunningham wrote primarily with a view to advocating a policy of forbearance towards the Sikhs.

There is a considerable uniformity in the attitude of the British writers towards history. They were not only guided by the state of Anglo-Sikh relations but also aimed at influencing British policy towards the Sikhs. They depended for the most part on local agencies for the acquisition of information, and used it in their narratives in the light of their experience and within the conceptual framework accepted from their own social background. They were often circumscribed by the language barrier and failed to grasp the inner working of the society which was so different from their own.

If Cunningham was unlike his predecessors and successors, it was not because of his attitude towards the subject but because of his capacity to evaluate the Sikh society in its own terms and within its own framework. His hands were not fettered by any single manuscript and his mind was not burdened by pre-conceived notions. He was catholic in his approach to the religion of the Sikhs and meticulous about facts. He proved to be a good historian, though he had no professional training.

All contemporary history is based on partial facts and English historical writing of this period was no exception. Due to their nearness to the events, the historians found it exceedingly difficult to take a detached view of things. However, their first-hand knowledge gave to their writings a certain degree of freshness and a feel of the age. But proper evalua-

tion is the pre-requisite of all research; these works therefore must not be used as authorities. In fact, they tell us as much about the Punjab in the early nineteenth century as about the British themselves.

European Travellers on Maharaja Ranjit Singh

Kulwinder Singh Bajwa*

Over half a dozen European travellers visited the Punjab during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, covering a phase of about 19 years, frcm 1820 to 1839. They belonged to different nationalities and visited the Punjab for different puıposes. For examining their impressions of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and his kingdom we may turn to three of them : William Moorcroft, Victor Jacquemont and Baron Charles Hugel. Their accounts relate to many aspects of life in the Punjab during the early nineteenth century. However, the present paper is confined to their ob servations on a few aspects of the life and position of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

To appreciate the significance of their observations, it is important to know their motives and objects. William Moorcıoft was a British veterinary surgeon to the Bengal Army.[1] His idea was to penetrate into Turkistan, to the country of a breed of good horses which it was his great ambition to domesticate in India. Coupled with this purpose was the idea of exploring the possibilities of establishing commercial intercourse with the trans-Himalayan districts.[2] Victor Jacquemont was a French naturalist. He was commissioned by the French Government to investigate the natural

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1 William Moorcroft and G. Trebeck, *Travels in the Himalayan Provinces of Hindustan and the Punjab, in Ladak and Kashmir, in Peshawar, Kabul and Kunduz and Bokhara from 1819 to 1825.* 2 Vols, Punjab Languages Department, Patiala 1970 (reprint — first published 1837), I, xix.

2 Moorcroft, *Travels*, I; xvi, xx.

history of India in all its branches and to collect material to enrich the Royal Museum of Natural History at Paris in order to promote the progress of science.[3] Baron Charles Hugel was a German. His primary purpose in visiting the Punjab was to know 'the greatness and power of the East India Company, the Maharaja's allyand the kingdom founded by Ranjit Singh'.[4]

Unlike Moorcroft and Jacquemont, Hugel goes into the historical background of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. He covers in about 22 pages the history of the Sikhs from Guru Nanak to the proclamation of the British Indian Government, protecting the Cis-Satlej states in 1809. The history of Ranjit Singh from his predecessors to his own times is narrated in an equal number of pages. The historical portion is sketchy, full of gaps and factual errors. It is based entirely on the work of others in English.[5] It may be safely suggested that this part of his *Travels* was meant to gratify the general curiosity of his countrymen about the kingdom of Lahore and its ruler.

In the assessment of Jacquemont and Hugel, the position of Maharaja Ranjit Singh was very strong. Jacquemont says that Ranjit Singh was a monarch absolutely independent, and possessing the greatest power in Asia after the British. He was better obeyed by his subjects than the Mughal emperors at the zenith of their power.[6] Hugel states that

[3] Victor Jacquemont, *Letters from India : Describing a Journey in the British Dominions of India, Tibet, Lahore and Cashmere during the years 1829, 1830, 1831, under the Order of the French Government*, 2 Vols, Edward Churton, London 1834, I, v. See also, M.F.O'Dwyer, "Jacquemont's Letters from India, Review", *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society*, XXIII, 1964 (reprint — first published 1936), 23; K. K. Khullar, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, Hem Publishers, Delhi 1980, 93.

[4] Baron Charles Hugel, *Travels in Kashmir and The Punjab containing a particular account of the Government and Character of the Sikhs*, Punjab Languages Department, Patiala 1970 (reprint — first published 1845), 293. See also, V. S. Suri (tr), *Umdatut Tawarikh*, Daftar III, pts (i-iv), Punjab Itihas Prakashan, Chandigarh 1974, 267.

[5] Hugel, *Travels*, 3 & 357.

[6] Jacquemont, *Letters*, I, 399; II, 244.

Ranjit Singh ruled undisturbed over both Hindus and Muslims. His kingdom being exclusively his own, nothing took place throughout its whole extent without his express commands. He was the soul that animated the entire body.[7] None of his courtiers or grandees had influence on his actions, and though he squandered vast sums on his favourites, they had no power over him. The foreigners in his service too had no influence over him. Their advice was followed when it was good, but it was never accepted without a trial of its value.[8] The Maharaja was a despot in the true sense of the word.[9]

Maharaja Ranjit Singh appears as a successful suzerain in the account of these travellers. For example, Moorcroft noticed that Sansar Chand, once a powerful ruler, was a vassal of Ranjit Singh, and had to go to his court once a year.[10] The Raja of Mandi was so frightened of his Sikh master that he did not allow Moorcroft to pass through his territories unless he secured permission from the Maharaja.[11] The Raja of Kulu was fined 80,000 rupees for having facilitated Shah Shuja's retreat to Ludhiana, and 5,000 rupees for giving co-operation to the British against the Gurkhas.[12] The chief of Ladakh requested Jacquemont to use his influence with the Maharaja to get the arrears due to the treasury of Lahore cleared.[13] When Hugel met Mihan Singh, the governor of Kashmir, he found that 'on the ground to his right, sat many of the Mohammedan Rajas from the Baramula and Muzafferabad mountains, tributaries of Ranjit Singh. One of every family is detained as a hostage in Kashmir, and from time to time they are obliged to bring large gifts to the Governor, otherwise their tribute is raised, their present condition is mainly owing

7 Hugel, *Travels*, 348, 404 & 410.

8 Hugel, *Travels*, 388.

9 Ibid, 330; Jacquemont, *Letters*, I, 342; II, 87.

10 Moorcroft, *Travels*, I, 76 & 78.

11 Ibid, I, 27 & 28.

12 Ibid, I, 107.

13 Jacquemont, *Letters*, II, 140-41.

to their former habits of independence'.[14] However, non-Muslim chiefs were no exception in this respect.[15] It appears from Hugel's observations that Ranjit Singh never approved of strong forts in the territories of his vassals.[16] Even Fateh Singh Ahluwalia, 'a brother of the turban to Ranjit Singh', was instantly summoned by the Maharaja when he heard of the construction of a fortress between Lahore and Ludhiana by Fateh Singh.[17] The Jamwal brothers seem nonetheless to have been an exception in this regard.[18]

Hugel felt in fact that some of the vassals of Maharaja Ranjit Singh were too powerful to be easily controlled by his successors : 'One of the great obstacles to the duration of the empire founded by Ranjit Singh, consists in the imprudence of suffering so much power to accumulate in the persons of his vassals'. Hugel had in mind the power of Jammu Rajas in particular. They had an army, fortresses and treasures, besides vast territories defended by natural barriers. Hugel did not doubt that they would avail themselves of the first opportunity to throw off the yoke.[19] Unlike Jacquemont and Hugel, Moorcroft had given the impression that the vassals of Ranjit Singh were so tired of his highhandedness that almost all of them wanted to come under British protection.[20]

From the observations of European travellers Maharaja Ranjit Singh's hold over his *jagirdars* appears to have been equally strong. A word from the Maharaja's lips could reduce a noble to a beggar.[21] Hugel says that 'whenever a sirdar died, Ranjit Singh according to the Indian usage of supremacy, claimed to be heir to his possessions, and in case the son had not made himself friend beforehand, he never recovered his

14 *Loc cit.*
15 Ibid, 63.
16 Ibid, 74.
17 Ibid. 397.
18 Ibid, 288.
19 Loc cit.
20 Moorcroft, *Travels.* I, 79, 104 & 107.
21 Hugel, *Travels*, 158 & 330.

rights. Under any circumstances, he had to pay a large sum by way of *nazzerana*, for the investiture of the turban at court'.[22] The 'fiefs' granted by Ranjit Singh were worth a revenue of 1,09,28,000 rupees, and could be 'withdrawn at any time by his arbitrary will or command'.[23] Hugel also refers to the transfer of *jagirs*.[24]

Not only the English but also the French and German travellers observed the contrast between the resources of the kingdom of Lahore and the British Empire. In Jacquemont's assessment Ranjit Singh was the only ruler who could possibly withstand the British, but even his resources were meagre as compared to those of the British Government.[25] Hugel states that 'Ranjit Singh is considered altogether independent of the British Indian Government, and in truth is as much so, as his position as a weaker neighbour can admit of'.[26] The Treaty of 1809 was a great setback to Ranjit Singh's cherished desire to command the whole Sikh nation. He felt bound to sign it. Hugel remarks that 'angry as the Maharaja was, he was aware of the necessity of coming to terms with the British Government, whose territories actually bordered on his own'.[27] Hugel records that the Maharaja resisted the British demands so long as he could afford it; but, when he found himself too weak to act against their wishes, he yielded.[28] The treaty obliged him to increase his power towards Kabul. But this was not necessarily what the British had wanted. If they did not interfere it was only because they had many weighty affairs on their hands.[29]

Jacquemont does not make any secret of British intentions. It is clear from his statements that the British Government

22 Hugel, *Travels*, 369.
23 Ibid, 404.
24 Ibid, 193.
25 Jacquemont, *Letters*, II, 118.
26 Hugel, *Travels*, 16.
27 Ibid, 277.
28 Loc cit
29 Hugel, *Travels*, 284.

wanted to extend its frontier from the Satlej to the Indus. The idea was to prevent the expansion of Ranjit Singh's kingdom towards Sindh.[30] In accordance with instructions from the Court of Directors, the Amirs of Sindh were pressed to sign a treaty 'affording every facility and protection to the commercial and military navigation of the British on the Indus'.[31] This was done without any reference to Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Hugel thought it was an act of disgrace on the part of a power like the East India Company.[32] In Jacquemont's view the meeting of the Governor-General with the Maharaja at Ropar was meant to frighten him, with a show of the superiority of British arms rather than to solicit his willing consent to the British proposals.[33]

Jacquemont believed that 'some day or other (but not for some years) the Company will extend limits of its empire from the Sutledge to the Indus'.[34] In Hugel's view, the friendship between these two powers was 'strong, sincere, reciprocal, full of confidence and without reserve', and 'it is in the interest of both the parties to maintain it'.[35] But he felt certain that the integrity of the Sikh Empire rested on its relations with the British Government. And for this he suggested that a treaty, offensive and defensive, with the British Government was the

30 Jacquemont, *Letters*, I, 231.

31 Ibid, II, 221.

32 Hugel, *Travels*, 324-25.

33 Jacquemont, *Letters*, II, 112: 'What Lord William wants with Ranjeet Singh, I am unable to guess,—to frighten him perhaps, and show him how easy it would be to annihilate him. The colonel of one of the two regiments of English cavalry in the Calcutta Presidency writes to me from Semla that he has been appointed to command, not the escort, but the army which is to accompany Governor-General to his interview with Runjeet, if it takes place; or the embacy (sic) to Lahore, in the reverse case. He will take his regiment of lances, a regiment of native cavalry, one of English infantry two of seapoys, and a battery of light artillery,—all picked for the occasion. I do not know how far the Maharaja will relish so many honours'.

34 Jacquemont, *Letters*, I, 232.

35 Hugel, *Travels*, 335-36.

only thing that could ensure the dominion of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. But such a treaty would have prevented the British from taking immediate advantage of any sudden occurrence which might fall out.[36] Thus it is clear that Ranjit Singh could never impose his will on the British. It is the British Government which on all crucial occasions imposed its will on Ranjit Singh.

Moorcroft formed a very high opinion of the cavalry of Maharaja Ranjit Singh: 'Not a single horse neighed, or was restive or vicious in the slightest degree, or was uneasy at mounting, or diverged from the path, though the Maharaja affirmed that they had not been ridden sometime past'.[37] Jacquemont found the Maharaja's troops better than his expectations in every respect. The army of the Maharaja 'resembled a good deal the armies described by the historians and poets of antiquity; and for this once the reality far surpassed my expectations'.[38] Ranjit Singh had 'twenty-five thousand well disciplined troops, and with so small a force he makes his neighbours tremble'.[39] Hugel was surprised to find that Ranjit Singh's troops were proficient in European tactics : 'During my stay in Lahore, his Highness the Maharaja has honoured me with a review of those regiments which were here by chance, and which, although soldiers only of a year's standing, astonished me by their good appearance and their quick fire : they are decidedly more advanced than recruits of the same standing are in Europe. If I had to proffer my opinion upon the service which may be expected from them, I should say that the troops of the Maharaja are fully prepared to dispute the palm of victory in the plains of the Panjab with any army crossing the Atok. The Austrians are celebrated for their shooting at the target; but there cannot be a better shot than one of the Gorchelis, who, every time he fired, shot through

36 Hugel, *Travels*, 409.

37 Moorcroft, *Travels*, I, 58-59.

38 Jacquemont, *Letters*, II, 183.

39 Ibid, 217.

the vessel placed as the target'.[40] In Hugel's assessment, thus, the army of Maharaja Ranjit Singh was inferior to that of the British; but it was superior to any coming from across the Indus.[41] The dress, movements, equipment, pay, words of command and fighting strength of the different organs of the Sikh army are described. According to Hugel, the whole army was generally kept twelve months in arrears as a good means of securing their subservience to the Maharaja.[42] The Europeans too were kept in arrears.[43]

Moorcroft and Jacquemont do not present a happy picture of the administration of justice in Kashmir. Moorcroft states : 'The Sikhs seem to look upon the Kashmirians as little better than cattle, the murder of a native by a Sikh is punished by a fine to the government, of from sixteen to twenty rupees, of which four rupees are paid to the family of the deceased if a Hindu, and two rupees, if he was a Mohammedan'.[44] Jacquemont remarks that 'throughout the whole viceroyality of Cashmere, there is no tribunal to settle private disputes upon the basis of equity'.[45] But Hugel says that 'men are too valuable to the present ruler of Kashmir to be lightly spared : penalties and stripes are therefore the usual punishments. The people seem contented with the justice dealt out to them, and admitted to me that more than one guilty person in every twenty is ever visited with the reward due to his crimes. The dreadful cruelties perpetrated by their earlier rulers, who, for the smallest offence punished them with the loss of their noses or ears, make the poor Indians well satisfied with their present comparatively mild government; and, in truth, there is very little oppression on the part of the governors or thanedars'.[46] The Maharaja was always unwilling

40 Hugel, *Travels*, 289 & 334-35.

41 Ibid, 332.

42 Ibid, 284.

43 Ibid, 355. See also, Jacquemont, *Letters*, I, 222.

44 Moorcroft, *Travels*, II, 442.

45 Jacquemont, *Letters*, II, 156.

46 Hugel, *Travels*, 156.

to inflict punishment of death or mutilation.[47] Indeed, the Punjab was 'much safer than Hindustan'.[48]

The court of the Maharaja was of special interest to these travellers. Jacquemont describes it as 'a singular' one.[49] Hugel was surprised to see its splendour.[50] The Maharaja used to sit on a plain golden arm chair, while his courtiers, with the exception of Hira Singh, sat upont he carpet.[51] The formal colour of the Darbar has been described by Hugel as yellow or green and all the chiefs and officers save Hira Singh were clothed in yellow garments.[52] Hugel, who visited the court in 1836, has recorded five prominent courtiers according to their rank : Raja Dhian Singh, Khushal Singh, Raja Suchet Singh, Hakim Azizuddin and Khalifa Nuruddin.[53] The other grandees of the Sikh court were with the army, or in their own territories. The feasts of the Holi and the Dassehra generally brought them all to the presence of the Maharaja. The most distinguished among them were Fateh Singh Ahluwalia and Hari Singh Nalwa.[54] All the travellers talk highly of the Faqir Brothers.[55]

About the religious attitude of the Maharaja Jacquemont states that he was a 'seikh by profession, a sceptic in reality'. Every year he paid his devotions at Amritsar and 'what is very singular, these devotions are paid at the tombs of several Mohammedan saints; yet these pilgrimages offend none of the puritans of his own sect'.[56] Hugel says that the golden roof of both the large and small buildings of Jawalamukhi were the gift of Ranjit Singh in testimony of his gratitude to the Devi.[57]

47 Hugel, *Travels*, 317.
48 Ibid, 316.
49 Jacquemont, *Letters*, II, 15.
50 Hugel, *Travels*, 308.
51 Moorcroft, *Travels*, I, 57. See also, Hugel, *Travels*, 286 & 301.
52 Hugel, *Travels*. 286.
53 Ibid, 387.
54 Ibid, 388.
55 Moorcroft, *Travels*, I, 57. See also, Hugel, *Travels*, 292.
56 Jacquemont, *Letters*, I, 399.
57 Hugel, *Travels*, 45.

These travellers were impressed by the ascendancy of the Maharaja over his courtiers and by his mental alertness. To Moorcroft the Maharaja was very communicative and familiar, and conversed, with apparent absence of all reserve, upon a variety of topics : his stud, military arrangement and his health.[58] Hugel states that the Maharaja poured out a torrent of questions during one of his meetings with him : 'He rarely spoke of India or the English territories there, but chiefly asked my opinion of his own country, his army, the European officers in his service, and the design of foreign countries and very distant lands of which he had hitherto heard nothing'.[59] The inquisitive Maharaja asked Hugel about the exercises, tactics and pay of the Austrian army, the military resources of Austria, France and England, and the number of disposable troops kept up by the different states of Europe.[60] Jacquemont was deeply impressed by the Maharaja's intellectual curiosity and alertness : 'His conversation is like a nightmare. He is almost the first inquisitive Indian I have seen; and his curiosity balances the apathy of the whole of his nation. He has asked a hundred thousand questions to me about India; the British, Europe, Bonaparte, this world in general and the next, hell, paradise, the soul, God, the devil, and a myriad of others of the same kind'.[61]

Personally brave, Ranjit Singh was a skillful diplomat and a wary politician.[62] He was an acute observer of manners and 'a better judge of horses, swords, and matchlocks, than the sciences of Europe'.[63] As a sagacious and skillful architect the Maharaja had formed one majestic fabric from many insignificant and unpromising fragments.[64]

58 Moorcroft, *Travels*, I, 59, 60, 61 & 62.
59 Hugel, *Travels*, 302.
60 Ibid, 289-90.
61 Jacquemont, *Letters*, I, 395.
62 Ibid, I, 383 & 399; II, 168.
63 Ibid, I, 398; II, 228.
64 Hugel, *Travels*, 294 & 366.

Image Of Maharaja Ranjit Singh As Depicted By Ram Sukh Rao

Joginder Kaur*

Ram Sukh Rao's work *Sri Fateh Singh Partap Prabhakar*, contains the history of Fateh Singh Ahluwalia, the ruler of Kapurthala in the Jullundur Doab.[1] Fateh Singh was an ally and 'turban-brother' of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, and participated in nearly all the military exploits of the Maharaja.[2] *Sri Fateh Singh Partap Prabhakar* therefore provides considerable information on Ranjit Singh's activities and his dealings with the *sardars* and *misaldars*. By viewing the political history of Ranjit Singh from the angle of *Sri Fateh Singh Partap Prabhakar*, a new dimension to our understanding of the Punjab under the Maharaja comes to light. Written in Gurumukhi, it is perhaps the only contemporary historical work which provides interesting and refreshing insights into the ways of the Maharaja that are generally not known.[3]

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1 Ram Sukh Rao is the author of three historical works on the Ahluwalia chiefs, Jassa Singh, Bhag Singh and Fateh Singh. These works are entitled *Jassa Singh Binod*, MS, M/772; *Bhag Singh Chandruday*, MS, M/773; *Sri Fateh Singh Partap Prabhakar*, MS, M/774; they are available at the Punjab State Archives, Patiala. Ram Sukh Rao was also the tutor and courtier of Fateh Singh Ahluwalia : ibid, ff 39b, 40a & 139a.

2 The entire work is full of Fateh Singh's relations with Ranjit Singh. For a description of the exchange of turbans, see ibid, f 89ab.

3 For a reproduction of the text consisting of 409 folios, and its critical analysis, see Joginder Kaur (ed). *Sri Fateh Singh Partap Prabhakar*, Ph.D. Thesis, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar 1978.

As Ram Sukh Rao concentrates on the political history of the last two decades of the eighteenth century, and the first three decades of the nineteenth century, this work covers all those conquests and expeditions of Ranjit Singh in which Fateh Singh himself or his forces participated. Besides this, more than half of *Sri Fateh Singh Partap Prabhakar* could be considered a commentary on Fateh Singh's relations with Ranjit Singh and the latter's dealings with his nobles and other vassals. Ram Sukh Rao's main emphasis is on the collection of factual information concerning Fateh Singh Ahluwalia's activities and exploits. He is at the same time at pains to project his patron in as favourable a light as possible. But his task becomes rather difficult when he presents Fateh Singh in relation to a masterful personality like Ranjit Singh. Whenever Fateh Singh received orders from the Maharaja as his vassal, Ram Sukh Rao is fair enough to mention that, but he also tries to balance the situation by underlining either the fidelity and diligence or the bravery and courage of Fateh Singh. As a corollary to this, Ram Sukh Rao does not spare Ranjit Singh for what he considers his occasional high-handedness and duplicity. Some of his comments on Ranjit Singh are rather severe but they also provide a rare insight into the ways and methods of the Maharaja.

Ram Sukh Rao says that in his early years Ranjit Singh was not very strong and, therefore, not very confident about his position. He left the siege of Miani and the battle against Raja Sansar Chand over Kathua unfinished.[4] According to the author, the financial position of Ranjit Singh was also not sound in the early years of his reign. He mentions that the Maharaja had to pay Budh Singh Singhpuria for military assistance at the rate of one hundred rupees a day by pawning utensils *(basan)*, presumably made of precious metals.[5] He further

[4] *Fateh Singh Partap Prabahkar*, ff 68b, 61 Ra-Rb & 62 Ra; ff 91b & 92a.

[5] Ram Sukh Rao seems to be the first writer to allude to the delicate financial position of Ranjit Singh as late as Sammat 1859 (A.D. 1802) :

says that whenever the Maharaja visited Amritsar in his early years, he would stay in the *katra* of the Ahluwalias since the *katra* and residence of the Sukarchakias in Amritsar at that time were 'unfit for use'.[6] Again, about this phase of Ranjit Singh's career, Ram Sukh Rao conveys the impression that in his dealings with the British the Maharaja relied heavily upon Fateh Singh's wisdom.[7] Furthermore, in his expeditions against Sahib Singh Bhangi of Gujrat, Budh Singh Bagga of Sujanpur, Sansar Chand of Kangra, the Pathans of Qasur and the Sikh chiefs across the Satlej, the Maharaja had to depend not only on Fateh Singh's active military help, but also an his prestige as the successor of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia.[8]

In the context of the politics of Jullundur Doab Ranjit Singh is presented as an enigma or as an opportunist. The Jullundur

ਤੇ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਬੁਧ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਸੋਂ ਰੁਪਈਯਾ ਰੋਜ਼ ਲੇਤੇ ਰਹੇ ॥ ਤੇ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਭੀ ਬਾਸਣ ਗਿਰਵੀ ਰਾਖ ਕਰ ਦੇਤੇ ਰਹੇਂ ॥

: *Fateh Singh Partap Prabhakar*, f 916.

6 It may be pointed out that although the Sukarchakias had their *katra* (quarter) and residence in Amritsar, it was not fit for use at that time. Perhaps on account of the Bhangis of Gujrat and Amritsar, Ranjit Singh had not been in a position to visit Amritsar frequently. In this context, his visit to Amritsar in the company of Fateh Singh and stay with Fateh Singh, appears to be significant, or even calculated :

ਤੇ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦਾ ਕਿਲਾ ਰਿਹਾਇਸ਼ ਵਾਲਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਾ । ਤੇ ਕਟੜਾ ਭੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਾ ॥ ਅਰੁ ਆਪ ਕੇ ਹੀ ਕਿਲੇ ਉਤਰੇ ॥

: ibid, f 91b.

7 Fateh Singh is presented as the only sagacious person and a sincere friend who perceived the situation correctly and warned Ranjit Singh of the likely consequences of going to war with the British. This advice appears finally to have carried weight with Ranjit Singh and he decided to become friendly with the British instead. Ranjit Singh had asked Fateh Singh to also represent him in the negotiations with General Lake who was encamped across the Beas While the negotiations were in progress, Ranjit Singh was reportedly reconsidering the acceptance of Holkar's suggestion. Fateh Singh at once contacted the Maharaja and saved the situation : ibid, ff 123ab, 124ab, 125ab, 126ab & 127a.

8 Ibid, ff 80b, 81a, 91ab, 94ab, 95a, 97ab, 98ab, 99ab, 100ab, 101ab, 102a, 103ab, 118ab, 19a, 1122b, 140ab, 141ab, 146b, 147a, 148b, 154b, 155ab, 156ab, 157ab, 158ab, 159ab, 160ab & 161a.

Doab had to be defended against the combined hostility of Sansar Chand, Jodh Singh Ramgarhia and other *sardars*, and yet the Maharaja left the siege of Bhunga and Bajwara in the middle, repairing to Anandpur for no obvious reason but pilgrimage.[9] Likewise, he did not come to Fateh Singh's help in the crucial battle of Drauli, asking Fateh Singh instead to cross over to the Majha, if he was unable to defend himself.[10] In fact, despite his offensive and defensive alliance with the Ahluwalia chief, the Maharaja was rather keen on protecting the Ramgarhias from the determined wrath of their traditional rival, Fateh Singh Ahluwalia. Ranjit Singh assuaged the resentment of Fateh Singh by often referring to their relationship and also to the old age of Jodh Singh Ramgarhia, and his impending end, thus assuring his ally that they would soon be appropriating the Ramgarhia territories.[11] However, after the death of Jodh Singh Ramgarhia, the division of his territory was evaded by the Maharaja on the plea that if it was effected at that time, Rani Sada Kaur would also ask for a share, and that between Fateh Singh and himself, they could decide the matter later on at any time they liked.[12]

It may be added that the Maharaja dealt with Sansar Chand in a similar manner when he told him that Kutlehar could not be given to him according to the Treaty of Kangra signed in 1809, because 'Bhai Sahib' that is, Fateh Singh, was likely to feel offended. In all probability, Ranjit Singh used Fateh Singh's name to evade giving Kutlehar to Sansar Chand.[13] Similarly, when Sada Kaur complained to the Maharaja that because of him the Doaba *sardars* had turned against her and that they should be punished for it, the Maharaja said that she should approach Fateh Singh in this regard.[14] While receiv-

9 *Fateh Singh Partap Prabhakar*, f 101ab.

10 Ibid, f 117a.

11 Ibid, ff 152ab, 153ab & 154a.

12 Ibid, f 275a.

13 Ibid, f 241ab.

14 Ibid, f 107a.

ing *nazrana* from Budh Singh Singhpuria for Hoshiarpur, the Maharaja beguiled Fateh Singh by saying that since Hoshiarpur had always been under the Ahluwalias, Fateh Singh could get it any time he wished.[15] Again, during Fateh Singh's stay at Jagraon, Chaudhari Qadir Bakhsh had been offered some of the Ahluwalia territories by the Maharaja deliberately as a bait for Fateh Singh's early return — without of course intending to give these to anyone.[16] Equally characteristic was the message sent to Fateh Singh with reference to the dispute between the sons of Bedi Sahib Singh that the matter should not be patched up until some territory, guns and cash, had been extorted from the disputants.[17]

Ram Sukh Rao also refers to certain 'unscruplous' acts of the Maharaja. For example, when Bhup Singh, the *thanadar* of Hoshiarpur, and Charat Singh, the *thanadar* of Bhunga, who were the vassals of Fateh Singh Ahluwalia, transferred their allegiance to Ranjit Singh, the latter accepted them into his fold 'without the slightest scruple'. Similarly, when Budh Singh, Hardas Singh, Naurang Singh, Diwan Singh Watalia and others, who formerly owed allegiance to Fateh Singh, started paying revenues to the Maharaja, he blatantly accepted this change-over. All such acts were contrary to his *ahadnama* with the Ahluwalia chief.[18]

In the context of the conquest of Multan, the author mentions the Maharaja forcing the officers and soldiers alike to return the plunder, declaring it to be a property of the state.[19] It is probable that Ranjit Singh was now gradually

15 *Fateh Singh Partap Prabhakar*, f 119b.
The original is rather interesting :

ਮਲੂਮ ਤਾਂ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਕੋ ਖੂਬ ਤਰਾਂ ਹੈ ਸਾ ॥ ਜੋ ਏਹ ਮਕਾਨ ਆਪ ਕਾ ਹੈ ਕਦੀਮ ਥੀਂ ॥
ਪਰ ਉਨਾ ਏਹ ਗਿਣੀ ਜੋ ਅਬ ਇਨ ਸੇ ਨਜਰਾਨਾ ਲੈ ਲਈਏ ॥ ਫੇਰ ਭਾਈ ਕਹਾ ਤਾਂ
ਉਨ ਕੋ ਮਕਾਨ ਲੈ ਦੇਵਾਂਗੇ ॥

16 Ibid, f 330b.

17 Ibid, f 395ab.

18 Ibid, ff 323b & 324ab.

19 Ibid, f 294a. According to Henry T. Prinsep, upon the return of the army to Lahore, a proclamation was made that the plunder of Multan was

shifting from his earlier informal ways and this must have been resented by everyone affected. There are references also to the merciless flogging of the defaulting *ijaradars*.[20] In case of a *jagirdar* showing reluctance to hand over his charge to a new assignee, the Maharaja even provided the necessary military help to ensure that his orders were carried out.[21] The author gives an interesting statement regarding the practice of the Maharaja :

> ਤੇ ਸਰਕਾਰੇ ਹਿਮੇਸ਼ਾ ਏਹੀ ਮਾਮੂਲ ਸਾ ਜੇ ਆਪਣੇਆਂ ਨੌਕਰਾਂ ਮੈ ਸੀ ਕਿਸੀ ਕੋ ਮਕਾਨ ਦੀਯਾ ਹੂਯਾ ਹੋਵੇ ॥ ਤੇ ਦੂਸਰੇ ਕੋ ਦੇਣਾ ਹੋਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਉਸ ਕੋ ਕਹਿਣਾ ਜੋ ਛੁਡਾਇ ਲੇ ॥ ਤੇ ਸਾਥ ਫੌਜ ਅਰੁ ਤੋਪਾਂ ਭੀ ਕਰ ਦੇਣੀਆਂ ॥ ਅਰੁ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਭੀ ਜਾਗਾ ਲੜ ਕੇ ਹੀ ਦੇਣੀ ॥ ਅਰੁ ਦੋਨਾਂ ਤਰਫਾਂ ਸੀ ਆਦਮੀ ਭੀ ਮਾਰੇ ਜਾਣੇ ਵਾਫੁਰ ॥ ਅਰੁ ਫੇਰ ਉਨਾਂ ਪਾਸ ਹੀ ਰਹਣਾ ॥ ਯਾ ਦੂਜਿਆਂ ਕੋ ਦੇਣਾ ॥ ਅਰੁ ਲਸ਼ਕਰ ਮੈ ਭੀ ਵਾਫੁਰ ਬੇਸ ਆਦਮੀ ਦੰਗੇ ਸੇ ਹਿਮੇਸ਼ਾ ਮਾਰੇ ਜਾਤੇ ਹੈਂ ॥ ਹਿੰਮਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਜਲੇਵਾਲੀਏ ਕੇ ਬੇਟੇ ਥੀਂ ਆਦਿ ਤੇ ਅਜੇ ਆਪ ਪਾਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੇ ਗਏ ॥ ਤੇ ਨਕੋਦਰ ਸੰਧਾਵਾਲੀਆ ਕੋ ਲਿਖਾ ਜੋ ਛੁਡਾਇ ਦੇਣਾ ॥ ਅਰੁ ਜਬ ਫੌਜ ਆਪ ਕੀ ਉਹਾਂ ਗਈ ਤੇ ਸੰਧਾਵਾਲੀਏ ਭੀ ਗਏ ॥ ਤੇ ਦੂਜਿਆਂ ਕੋ ਲਿਖ ਦੀਆ ਜੋ ਇਨ ਕੇ ਪਾਸ ਹੀ ਰਹੇ ॥ ਤੇ ਇਸੀ ਵਜਾ ਦੋਨਾਂ ਕੋ ਲਿਖ ਲਿਖ ਕੇ ਕਿਤਨੇ ਮਰਤਬੇ ਹੀ ਆਪ ਕੇ ਮੋਤਬਰਾਂ ਕੀ ਤਰਫ ਭੇਜੇ ॥ ਫੇਰ ਏਕ ਰੋਜ ਹਮਲਾ ਕਰਾ ॥ ਤੇ ਜਾਗਾ ਮਾਰੀ ॥ ਅਰੁ ਆਪ ਕੀ ਫੌਜ ਮੈਂ ਸੀ ਬੀਚ ਕਾਮ ਕੇ ਆਏ ॥ ...ਫੇਰ ਇਸੀ ਸੂਰਤ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਆਵਤਾ ਸਾ ਜੋ ਜਾਗਾ ਏਸ ਕੋ ਦੇਣੀ ਕਬੀ ਉਸ ਕੋ ਦੇਣੀ ॥[22]

Nevertheless, there were occasions when the Maharaja himself forbade the compliance of his direct orders unless they were

the property of the state, and that all soldiers and officers alike, possessing any article of the spoil, were to bring it to the treasury under penalty of heavy punishment : *Origin of the Sikh Power in the Punjab*, 92. See also, Sohan Lal, *Umdat ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar II, 221-22.

20 *Fateh Singh Partap Prabhakar*, ff 342a & 358b.

21 It may however be added that this practice, in all probability, was a part of the gradual process of subjugation of the old *sardars* and *misaldars* by the Maharaja who, in fact, anticipated this resistance and accordingly provided for it. It may also be mentioned that this statement of Ram Sukh Rao would be applicable largely to the early years of Ranjit Singh's reign. Sohan Lal clearly states that the Maharaja in his later years took a very serious view of these feuds and the resultant bloodshed : *Umdat ut-Tawarikh* (tr V.S. Suri), S. Chand & Co., Delhi 1961, Daftar III, 293.

22 *Fateh Singh Partap Prabhakar*, ff 382b-383a.

issued four times.[23] While granting certain forts and territories to Chaudhari Qadir Bakhsh and his associates, the Maharaja had also sent instructions to the *thanadars* that notwithstanding his written orders, they should not vacate the forts.[24]

Ram Sukh Rao refers to the quarrels and jealousies among the various commanders during the Hazara and Multan expeditions. The Maharaja was not only aware of this disharmony but he quite deliberately connived at it, if not actually engendering it. The initiative left by him to his commanders in the battlefield was in all probability effectively curtailed by the differences among them, thus maintaining some sort of balance in the absence of the Maharaja.[25] However, when Ranjit Singh himself was present, he did not brook any disobedience from his officers and soldiers, and those guilty of it were ruthlessly dealt with. Ram Sukh Rao, particularly alludes to the forcible shifting of the various *deras* in Hazara in the night to a place where the Maharaja was encamped.[26] He adds that at the new site there was a great scarcity of water, and yet the Maharaja did not allow them to dig wells.[27] Moreover, they were forced to cross the Indus at a point where it was dangerously swollen, and many soldiers were drowned. In fact, the Maharaja is said to have caused this 'needless loss of life' a number of times.[28] The author is rather severe in his criticism of Ranjit Singh on this point and almost suggests

23 *Fateh Singh Partap Prabhakar*, f 369 b :

ਤੇ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੇ ਦਾਰੋਗਯਾ ਕੋ ਫਰਮਾਇਆ ਹੂਆ ਸਾ ਜੋ ਅਸੀਂ ਚਾਰ ਫੇਰੀ ਰੂਬਰੂ ਪਰਵਾਨਗੀ ਦੇਈਏ ਤਾਂ ਏਹ ਘੋੜਾ ਦੇਣਾ ॥

24 Ibid, f 330b.

25 Ibid, ff 246b & 287b.

26 Ibid, f 317b.

27 Ibid, ff 317b & 318a.

28 Ibid, ff 319a-320a :

ਕਿਸ਼ਤੀਆਂ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੇ ਮਨੇ ਕਰਦੀਆਂ ਜੋ ਨਾ ਆਵੇਂ ॥ ਤੇ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਕੇ ਸਿਰਕਰਦੇ ਕਹੇਂ ਜੋ ਕਿਸ਼ਤੀਆਂ ਤਾਂ ਵਾਫੂਰ ਅਟਕ ਕੇ ਪੱਤਣ ਸੀਆਂ ਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਜਾਗਾ ਭੀ ॥ ਤੇ ਯਾ ਊਹਾਂ ਸੇ ਲਾਂਘਤੇ ਯਾ ਮੰਗਾਇ ਲੇਤੇ ॥ ਤਾਂ ਆਪਨੇ ਫਰਮਾਇਆ ਜੋ ਉਨਕਾ ਵਾਇਦਾ ਹੀ ਇਸੀ ਵਜਾ ਸਾ ॥

that the Maharaja may have been a sadist. But it is more likely that this was resorted to by Ranjit Singh essentially to discipline his men who had shown reluctance to obey his orders and encamp on the site previously chosen.

On the whole, if we try to understand the nature of Ram Sukh Rao's account of Ranjit Singh's policies and measures, we get the impression that the Maharaja was assiduously building a powerful kingdom which necessitated the use of all kinds of devices. This obviously could not be relished by those whose fall from power was an essential pre-requisite for achieving this objective.

Historical Significance of Jassa Singh Binod

Joginder Singh Bains*

Ram Sukh Rao's *Jassa Singh Binod* is a history of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia.[1] The author was commissioned by Fateh Singh Ahluwalia of Kapurthala to write the history of the Ahluwalia chiefs. He wrote three works : *Jassa Singh Binod*, on the life and exploits of *Jassa Singh Ahluwalia* (1718-1783); *Bhag Singh Chandaruday*, on Fateh Singh's father; *Sri Fateh Singh Partap Prabhakar*, on the life of Fateh Singh Ahluwalia himself. The paper attempts at presenting the historical significance of *Jassa Singh Binod* which was written probably in 1831.[2]

Jassa Singh Binod is written in Gurmukhi script.[3] The author begins his work with *manglacharan*, the traditional invocation of Ganesh and Krishna. Ram Sukh Rao traces the geneology of his patron from Brahma, and connects the Ahluwalias with the house of Jaisalmer. Then he gives the names of the 'Muslim' kings of Hindustan down to the later Mughals, and he subsequently narrates a brief history of the Sikh Gurus. The author devotes one sixth of this work to the prelimi-

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1 Only one copy of this work, in manuscript form, containing 250 folios, is available at the Punjab State Archives, Patiala : see *Jassa Singh Binod* MS, M/772, PSA, Patiala.

2 Dr Joginder Kaur's work on *Sri Fateh Singh Partap Prabhakar* has been very useful in the analysis of *Jassa Singh Binod* and also in establishing the probable date of its compilation : see Joginder Kaur (ed), *Ram Sukh Rao's Fateh Singh Partap Prabhakar*, Ph. D. Thesis, GNDU, Amritsar 1978, "Introduction", 21.

3 For a discussion of Ram Sukh Rao's literary style and presentation, see ibid, 21-31.

naries. In the rest of the work, in about 200 folios, the political history of the eighteenth century with special reference to Jassa Singh Ahluwalia is narrated.

The present paper briefly covers Ram Sukh Rao's treatment of Jassa Singh's struggle against the Afghans; military organization and mode of warfare during the period; his relations with other Sikh chiefs and the Sodhis; and his contribution towards the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Amritsar.

Ram Sukh Rao mainly deals with the political history of the period. Jassa Singh is referred to as 'Panth ke Malik' leading the struggle against the Mughal rulers and the Afghan invaders.[4] He is the chief commander directing the operations of the war. Other important *sardars*, like the Bhangis Hari Singh, Jhanda Singh, Gulab Singh and Lehna Singh as well as Charat Singh Sukarchakia and Jai Singh Kanhiya, fought under his command.[5]

Jassa Singh like every other Sikh believed in the ultimate victory of the Panth. He is said to be conquering the country by the orders of the Guru.[6] Therefore, he spurned the offer of job under Adina Beg Khan.[7] When Kaura Mal brought the offer of a *jagir* from the *subadar* of Lahore, Jassa Singh refused the offer.[8] During the last invasion of Ahmad Shah, Jassa Singh received the offer of governorship from the Abdali, but Jassa Singh rejected it saying : 'On whom God has bestowed rulership, they need not look to others'.[9]

The Ahluwalia chief led many expeditions in the upper Ganga Doab to chastise and weaken the supporters of the

4 Ram Sukh Rao, *Jassa Singh Binod*, ff 76 ab, 125a, 226a & 230a.

5 Ibid, ff 121b & 122a.

6 Ibid, f 64b :

ਅਰੁ ਗੁਰਾਂ ਕੇ ਹੁਕਮ ਸੇ ਮੁਲਖਗੀਰੀ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਫਿਰਤੇਂ ਹਾਂ ॥

7 Ibid, f 71a.

8 Ibid, f 72b :

ਤੇ ਕੌੜਾ ਮੱਲ ਨੇ ਜਾਹਰ ਕਰਿਆ ਜੋ ਜਾਗੀਰ ਲਈਏ ਤੇ ਨਬਾਬ ਜੀ ਕੇ ਰਫੀਕ ਹੂ ਜੀਏ ॥...... ਤੇ ਆਪ ਨੇ ਬਾਤ ਨਾ ਮਾਨੀ ॥

9 Ibid, f 188b :

Abdali in India : Najibuddaulah and the Mughal emperor. It appears from Ram Sukh Rao's account that the Ahluwalia chief aimed at the conquest of Hindustan. When the capture of Lahore by the Bhangi *sardars* and others in 1765 was discussed, Jassa Singh is reported to have said : 'Sardars Lehna Singh, Gujjar Singh and Sobha Singh are also ours. My aim is to conquer Hindustan. If I stayed at Lahore, the administration of that side will be neglected'.[10]

The description of Jassa Singh's exploits also throws light on the military organization and mode of warfare during the period. During the first half of the eighteenth century, the Sikh forces were divided into *deras* which appear to have been voluntary associations organized along clan or locality basis. The leaders were marked by their valour.[11] These *deras* were constantly on the move due to the pressure of the Mughals and the Afghans.[12]

Recruitment to the army was voluntary. Sons of the *zamindars* offered themselves in large numbers.[13] Ram Sukh Rao

ਜੋ ਇਸਮ ਬਾਦਸਾਹ ਜੀ ਕਾ ਰਹਿ ।। ਅਰੁ ਮੁਲਖੁ ਏਹ ਜਾਗੀਰ ਹੂਆ ਉਨਕੋ ॥ ਅਰੁ ਜਿਸ ਸੂਰਤ ਚਾਹੇਂ ਸੋ ਲਿਖਾਇ ਲੇਵੇਂ ॥ ਫੇਰ ਆਪਨੇ ਕਹਾ ਜੋ ਜਿਨ ਕੋ ਮਾਲਕ ਮੁਲਖ ਬਖਸਤਾ ਹੈ ਉਨ ਕੋ ਹੋਰੁ ਕਿਸੀ ਕੀ ਇਲਤਜਾਈ ਨਹੀਂ ਰਹਿਤੀ ॥ ਅਰੁ ਬਾਤ ਉਨਕੀ ਨਾ ਮਾਨੀ ॥

10 Ibid, f 173b :

ਫੇਰ ਸਭ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਇਕਠੇ ਹੂਏ ॥ ਤਾਂ ਲਾਹੌਰ ਕੇ ਮੁਕਦਮੇ ਕਾ ਜਿਕਰ ਚਲਾ ॥ ਤਾਂ ਆਪਨੇ ਕਹਾ ਕਿ ਲਹਿਣਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਤੇ ਸੋਭਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਤੇ ਗੁਜਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਹੋਰੀਂ ਏਹ ਭੀ ਆਪਣੇ ਹੀ ਹੈਂ ॥ ਅਰੁ ਹਮਾਰਾ ਇਰਾਦਾ ਜੋ ਹੈ ਸੋ ਹਿੰਦੁਸਤਾਨ ਮੇ ਕਬਜਾ ਕਰਨੇ ਕਾ ਹੈ ॥ ਲਾਹੌਰ ਮੈ ਰਹੇ ਤਾਂ ਫੇਰ ਉਸ ਤਰਫ ਕਾ ਬੰਦੋਬਸਤ ਨਾ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ ॥

11 Ibid, 200b :

ਜੋ ਜੋਨਸਾ ਬਡਾ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਹੋਵੇ ਸੋ ਹਮਲੇ ਦਰਮਿਆਨ ਭੀ ਆਗੇ ਹੋਵੇ ਸਭ ਸੈ ।। ਤੇ ਹਥਿਆਰ ਭੀ ਆਪ ਕਰੇ ॥

12 Ibid, f 58a :

ਅਰੁ ਈਹਾਂ ਕੀਆਂ ਥੀ ਬਾਤਸਾਹੀ ਫੌਜਾਂ ਸੀਆਂ ॥ ਤੇ ਵਿਲਾਇਤ ਕੀ ਤਰਫੋਂ ਭੀ ਆਵਤੀਆਂ ਸੀਆਂ ॥ ਬਾਦਸਾਹ ਜੀ ਕੇ ਸਾਥ ॥ ਏਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਮਕਾਨ ਨੂੰ ਰੋਕਤੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੇ ॥

13 Ibid, f 58a :

ਤੇ ਵਾਫੂਰ ਹੀ ਮਕਾਨ ਕੇ ਜਿਮੀਦਾਰਾਂ ਕੇ ਬੇਟੇ ਪਾਹੁਲਾਂ ਲੈਇ ਲੈਇ ਕੇ ਫੋਜ ਮੈ ਰਲਤੇ ਸੇ ॥

says that the Ahluwalia chief administered *pauhal* to the new entrants before recruiting them.[14]

The Sikh forces subsisted on loot. Whenever they looted a city or a caravan or the government treasury or the cattle, the plunder was distributed amongst the soldiers.[15] The leader got the fourth share of the loot.[16] He kept the guns and ammunition also.[17] The author further says that some of the Sikh leaders grew rich through loot and then began to recruit personal soldiers.[18] For the later half of the eighteenth century there are numerous references in *Jassa Singh Binod* to the *khas fauj* and the *jagirdari fauj*.[19]

Cavalry formed the major part of the army. Every foot soldier tried his utmost to enter the cavalry after procuring a horse. Many a time the tribute from the conquered territory was taken in horses which were distributed among the soldiers.[20] Jassa Singh even purchased horses to give them to his soldiers.[21]

14 Ram Sukh Rao, *Jassa Singh Binod*, f 106b :

ਤੇ ਆਪ ਜੋ ਇਸ ਮਜਬ ਕੀ ਰਸੂਮ ਹੈ ਪਾਹੁਲ ਸੀਂ ਆਦਿ ਓਹ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਨਕੋ ਸਿਘਾਂ ਮੈ ਰਲਾਵਤੇ ਸੇ ॥

15 Ibid, f 58a :

ਤਾਂ ਉਹਾਂ ਲੜਨਾ ਤੇ ਓਸ ਜਾਗਾ ਕੋ ਮਾਰਨਾ ॥ ਤੇ ਲੂਟਾਂ ਸਭ ਫੋਜ ਕੋ ਮਾਫ ਕਰਨੀਆਂ ॥

16 Ibid, f 199a :

ਤਾਂ ਕਿਤਨਿਆਂ ਕੁ ਅਰਜ ਕਰੀ ਜੋ ਆਪ ਚਹਾਰਮ ਲੂਟ ਕੀ ਲਈਏ ॥

17 Ibid, f 166b :

ਤਾਂ ਓਨਾ ਜਾਹਰ ਕਰਾ ਜੋ ਘੋੜੇ ਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਅਸਬਾਬ ਤਾਂ ਜਿਨਾ ਬਹਾਦਰਾਂ ਲੂਟੇ ਸੇ ਸੋ ਉਨ ਕੇ ਪਾਸ ਹੀ ਰਹਾ ॥ ਅਰੁ ਤੋਪਾਂ ਤੇ ਬਾਣ ਏਹ ਹਾਜੁਰ ਹੈ ॥

18 Ibid, f 106b :

ਤੇ ਕਈ ਸਹਿਰਾਂ ਕੀਆਂ ਲੂਟਾਂ ਮੈ ਦੋਲਤਮੰਦ ਹੋਇ ਜਾਤੇ ਸੇ ॥ ਅਰੁ ਕਈ ਅਦਨਿਆਂ ਸੀਂ ਆਲਾ ਹੋਇ ਜਾਤੇ ਸੇ ॥

19 Ibid, ff 124b & 161b.

20 Ibid, f 75b :

ਤਾਂ ਆਪ ਨੇ ਆਦਮੀ ਭੇਜੇ ॥ ਜੋ ਸਭ ਗਾਂਵ ਨਜਰੋ ਕੇ ਤਾਂ ਘੋੜੇ ਲਿਆਵਾਂਗੇ ਹੀ ॥ ਪਰ ਮਾਮਲੇ ਕੇ ਟਕਿਆਂ ਮੈ ਭੀ ਘੋੜੇ ਹੀ ਲਿਆਵੇ ॥...ਤੇ ਕਈ ਜੋ ਡੇਰੇ ਮੈ ਪਿਆਦੇ ਫਿਰਤੇ ਸੇ ਤਾਂ ਉਨ ਕੋ ਭੀ ਇਨਾਇਤ ਹੂਏ ॥

21 Ibid, f 176a :

ਫੇਰ ਵੈਰੋਵਾਲ ਕੇ ਪਠਾਣਾ ਘੋੜੇ ਹਾਜਰ ਕਰੇ ਉਮਦਾ ॥
ਤਾਂ ਉਨ ਕੀ ਕੀਮਤ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਲੀਏ ॥

About infantry, Ram Sikh Rao says that it was used in realising tribute and taxes. It also carried the loot and performed the garrison and sentry duties.[22] He also notices the presence of a detachment of Nihangs, under the leadership of Darbara Singh, who participated in the campaigns of Jassa Singh.[23]

About the weapons used in warfare the author says that in the early period, muskets and matchlocks were commonly used alongwith bow and arrow. The author praises Jassa Singh at various places for his archery.[24] He also praises the Sikhs as excellent shots.[25] Swords and lances were used in hand to hand fight. The swivels *(zamburaks)* were employed in the second half of the eighteenth century, but the siege guns to capture the forts appear to have come into use only in the last quarter of the century. Ram Sukh Rao refers to the use of guns in connection with the siege of Sultan Pur Lodhi, Mai Wind and Nur Mahal.[26]

The Sikh forces usually marched in separate columns *(tuman)* under their immediate commanders.[27] The Sikhs preferred cavalry charges. In the later half of the eighteenth century various pitched battles were fought *(kotah hathiar)*. These hand to hand fights were done with swords and daggers. In order to approach the enemy trenches, soldiers usually alighted from their horses and walked on foot. The enemy was

22 Ram Sukh Rao, *Jassa Singh Binod*, f 108a.

23 *Loc cit*

24 Ibid, f 79a:

ਹਜ਼ੂਰ ਕੇ ਤੀਰਾਂ ਕੀ ਆਗੇ ਭੀ ਮਸ਼ਾਹੂਰੀ ਸੀ ॥ ਜੋ ਜਿਸਕੋ ਲੜਾਈ ਮੈ ਲਾਗਤਾ ਸਾ ॥
ਓਹੁ ਊਹਾਂ ਹੀ ਰਹਿਤਾ ਸਾ ॥

25 Ibid, f 132a :

ਅਰੁ ਬੰਦੂਖਾਂ ਕੀ ਕਸਰਤ ਸਿੰਘਾਂ ਕੋ ਬੇਸ ਸੀ ॥ ਤੇ ਦੂਰ ਸੇਂ ਭੀ ਨਹੀ ਸੇ ਚੂਕਤੇ ॥ ਅਰੁ
ਨਜ਼ਦੀਕ ਕੀਆਂ ਬੰਦੂਖਾਂ ਭੀ ਬਡੀ ਜਲਦੀ ਸੈਂ ਕੋਤਾ ਹਥਿਆਰਾਂ ਕੇ ਅਰਸੇ ਸੈਂ ਚਲਾਵਤ
ਸੇ ॥

26 Forts of Sultanpur Lodhi, Mai Wind, and Nur Mahal were captured in 1773, 1775, and 1781, respectively. The siege guns were employed to capture these forts. For detail, see ibid, ff 209a, 213a & 234ab.

27 Ibid, ff 121b, 137b & 184b.

often harrassed by resorting to night attack *(shab khun)*.[28] While fighting in the plains the army commonly dug up trenches and erected barricades *(chhahian)* around the encampment. These were protected by guns.[29] According to Ram Sukh Rao, foraging *(kahi)* was a regular feature of military operations. The camp of the enemy was usually plundered and sometimes burnt.[30]

Ram Sukh Rao presents Jassa Singh's dealings with some of his contemporaries in terms of suzerain-vassal relationship. In this connection, his relations with the Rajas of Patiala, Jind, Nabha and the chief of Bhadaur may be treated at some length.

During his expedition to chastise Najibuddaulah, Raja Ala Singh assisted Jassa Singh with a contingent.[31] In 1765, Jassa Singh had appointed Dayal Singh as his *thanadar* in Payal, but later on it was given to Himmat Singh, brother of Raja Amar Singh, who took service with the Ahluwalia chief, and he was granted the *chaharam* of Payal in lieu of service *(naukari)*.[32]

After the conquest of Sarhind when the Ahluwalia chief wanted to enhance the *mu'amala*, Ala Singh of Patiala, Amir Singh of Nabha, Gajpat Singh of Jind and Chuhar Singh of Bhadaur pleaded against it saying that since they also served in the campaigns of the Ahluwalia *sardar* the *mu'amala* should not be enhanced.[33] In the same year, Sunam and Munak, which were in rebellion against Patiala, were conquered

28 Ram Sukh Rao, *Jassa Singh Binod*, ff 78b, 137a & 139a.

29 Ibid, f 169b.

30 Ibid, ff 64a & 110a.

31 Ibid, f 127a :

ਤੇ ਫਰਮਾਇਆ ਜੋ ਰਾਜਾ (ਰਾਜਾ ਆਲਾ ਸਿੰਘ) ਹੋਰੀ ਮੁਲਖ ਮੈ ਰਹੇਂ ॥ ਤੇ ਫੌਜ ਸਾਥ ਕਰ ਦੇਵੇਂ ॥

32 Ibid, f 161b :

ਫੇਰ ਪਾਇਲ ਜਾਇ ਉਤਰੇ ॥ ਦਿਆਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਕੋ ਠਾਣਦਾਰ ਛੋਡੇਆ ॥ ਤ ਹਿੰਮਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਪਟਿਆਲੇ ਵਾਲੇ ਰਾਜੇ ਅਮਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਕੇ ਭਾਈ ਕੋ ਚਹਾਰਮ ਨੌਕਰੀ ਮੈ ਦਈ ॥

33 Ibid, f 162a :

ਫੇਰ ਰਾਜਾ ਆਲਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਪਟਿਆਲੇ ਵਾਲੇ ॥ ਤੇ ਆਂਬੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਨਾਭੇਵਾਲਾ ॥ ਤੇ ਗਜਪਤਿ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀਂਦਵਾਲਾ ॥ ਤੇ ਚੂਹੜ ਸਿੰਘ ਭਦੌੜੀਆ ॥ ਏਹ ਸਭ ਘੋੜੇ ਲੇ ਕਰ

and given to the Patiala chief in return for the payment of the enhanced *mu'amala*.[34] In 1765, Jind and Safidon were granted to Gajpat Singh. However, he had to pay half the income from the revenue of these places to the Ahluwalia chief and the other half he was allowed to keep for himself in lieu of service.[35]

After the demise of Raja Amar Singh of Patiala in February 1782, an officer from Patiala came to Jassa Singh to inform and receive directions. Jassa Singh directed that Nanu Mal should conduct the affairs of the state as usual; anybody showing disobedience or refractoriness was to be turned out of the state. Jassa Singh was also requested to administer *pauhal* to Sahib Singh and arrange his marriage with the daughter of Ganda Singh Bhangi.[36]

Ram Sukh Rao refers also to Ranjit Singh Ramgarhia of Lakhpur, Tara Singh Dallewalia, Budh Singh Singhpuria and Garib Das of Mani Majra as the vassals of the Ahluwalia chief.[37] These chiefs paid *nazrana* and sent their *vakils* to be stationed at the court of the Ahluwalia *sardar*. Ibrahim Khan of Kapurthala and Dharam Das Topi of Jodhanagar too were first reduced to the status of vassals before their territories were finally annexed.[38]

ਮਿਲੇ ॥ ਫ਼ੇਰ ਮਾਮਲੇ ਕੀਆਂ ਬਾਤਾਂ ਹੋਤੀਆਂ ਰਹੀਆਂ ॥ ਅਰੁ ਮਾਮਲਾ ਜ਼ਿਆਦਾ ਤਲਬ ਕਰਿਆ ॥ ਤਾਂ ਉਨਾ ਅਰਜ ਕਰੀ ਜੋ ਅਸੀਂ ਨੌਕਰੀ ਭੀ ਮੁਹਿਮ ਦਰਮਿਆਨ ਦੇਤੇ ਹਾਂ ॥ ਅਰੁ ਹੋਰੁ ਖਰਚ ਭੀ ਸਭ ਹਾਜ਼ੁਰ ਕਰੇ ॥ ਤੇ ਨਜ਼ਰਾਨਾ ਤੇ ਦਰਬਾਰ ਕਾ ਖਰਚ ਭੀ ਮਾਮਲੇ ਸੇਂ ਉਪਰ ਹੋਇ ਜਾਤਾ ਹੈ ।

34 Ram Sukh Rao, *Jassa Singh Binod*, f 167ab :

ਰਾਜਾ ਆਲਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਜਾਹਰ ਕਰਾ ਜੋ ਸੁਨਾਮ ਤੇ ਮੂਣਕ ਹਮਾਰੇ ਸੈਂ ਯਾਗੀ ਹੈਂ ॥ ਨਜਰਾਨਾ ਲਈਏ ਤੇ ਇਹ ਮਕਾਨ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਛੁਡਾਇ ਦੇਵੋ ॥......ਅਰੁ ਏਹ ਦੋਵੇਂ ਮਕਾਨ ਰਾਜਾ ਆਲਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਕੇ ਹਵਾਲੇ ਕੀਏ ॥ ਅਰੁ ਆਗੇ ਸੀਂ ਇਨ ਮਕਾਨੋ ਕਾ ਭੀ ਮਾਮਲਾ ਮੁਕਰਰ ਹੂਆ ॥

35 Ibid, f 167a.

36 Ibid, f 241a.

37 Ibid, ff 101a, 113a, 114b, 127ab, 128a, 162b, 163a, 233a, 238ab & 243b.

38 Ibid, ff 188a, 209a & 225ab.

The author throws some interesting sidelights also on the relations between the Sodhis and the Sikh *sardars*. Sodhi Wadhbagh Singh of Kartarpur was threatened by Saadat Yar Khan, the *faujdar* of Jullundur in June 1763. The Sodhi sent an appeal for help to Jassa Singh who was then at Amritsar with many other *sardars*. Some of the *sardars* present declined to help the Sodhi because he was the descendant of Dhir Mal. Jassa Singh is said to have observed : 'No doubt, they are Dhirmalias, yet they have always remained in attendance'.[39] Then Jassa Singh, Karora Singh, Tara Singh and Khushal Singh rushed to the help of the Sodhi and the Afghan forces retreated towards Jullundur.[40]

In 1781, Gulab Singh Sodhi approached Jassa Singh through Kanwar Bhag Singh that the Sikhs did not accept the '*parshad*' from the Sodhis of Kartarpur. Jassa Singh consulted the other *sardars* in this matter. Darbara Singh Akali and the Singhpuria chiefs were against reconciliation. They reminded Jassa Singh that at the *pauhal* ceremony, a Sikh was told not to have any dealings with the descendants of the *masands*, the Dhir Malias and the Ram Raiyas. Moreover, they said that the Sodhis of Kartarpur did not take *pauhal* and they also had close ties with the Ram Raiyas. But Jassa Singh was able to prevail upon the *sardars* and they all took the meals served by the Sodhi.[41]

Furthermore, there was scarcity of water near Darbar Sahib at Anandpur. Jassa Singh constructed a *baoli* (well). He directed the Sodhis to repair the buildings of the *bungas* and *havelis* and helped them with money.[42] From Ram Sukh Rao's account it appears that Jassa Singh was accepted as their overlord by the Sodhis of Kartarpur. Their contingent served in Jassa Singh's forces.[43] Besides Nahar Singh who got Chamkaur, Kukumajra

39 Ram Sukh Rao, *Jassa Singh Binod*, f 117a.

40 Loc cit

41 Ibid, ff 239b & 240a.

42 Ibid, f 195b.

43 Ibid, f 117a.

and some other villages, Sodhi Prem Singh was given a *jagir* worth twenty-five thousand rupees.[44]

After the conquest of Sarhind, Jassa Singh is said to have given 65 villages to the Sodhis near Chamkaur. He also directed the other *sardars* to grant villages to the Sodhis, and directed the Sodhis to maintain an army and control the hill chiefs from there. Jassa Singh too had stationed a force there with ammunition and stores.[45] Ram Sukh Rao, however, does not give any details about these hill chiefs or of Jassa Singh's dealings with them. Perhaps to consolidate his position in the Jullundur Doab, and to weaken the Ramgarhias, Jassa Singh had entered into this relationship with the Sodhis.

Ram Sukh Rao provides some very interesting information about the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Amritsar by Jassa Singh. Jassa Singh constructed the Harmandir after its demolition by Ahmad Shah Abdali. At this time, Amritsar was under mortgage with Sahib Rai Naushehria.[46] Jassa Singh paid

[44] Ram Sukh Rao, *Jassa Singh Binod*, f 113b :

ਫੇਰ ਸੋਢੀ ਆਨੰਦਪੁਰੀਏ ਆਏ ॥ ਤਾਂ ਨਾਹਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਕੋ ਚਮਿਕੌਰ ਤੇ ਕੁਕੂਮਾਜਰੇ ਕਾ ਤੇ ਔਰ ਗਾਂਵ ਭੀ । ਤੇ ਚੈਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਕੋ ਕੁਰਾਲੀ ॥ ਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਗਾਂਵ ਭੀ ਲਾਇ ਦੀਏ ॥ ਤੇ ਪੰਝੀ ਹਜਾਰ ਕੀ ਜਾਗੀਰ ਪਰੇਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਕੋ । ਏਹ ਸੋਢੀ ਸਾਹਬਾਂ ਕੋ ਅਰਦਾਸ ਕਰਵਾਇਆ ।

[45] Ibid, f 195b :

ਅਰੁ ਚਮਕੌੜ ਕੇ ਗਿਰਦ ਸੋਢੀਆਂ ਕੋ ਪਹਿਠ ਗਾਂਊ ਅਰਦਾਸ ਕਰਵਾਇ ਸੇ ਜਬ ਸੀਰੰਦ ਜੈਨ ਖਾਂ ਕੋ ਮਾਰਿਆ ਸਾ ॥ ਔਰ ਸਰਦਾਰੋਂ ਸੇ ਭੀ ਗਾਂਵ ਦੁਵਾਇ ਦੀਏ ॥ ਤੇ ਫਰਮਾਇਆ ਜੋ ਏਸ ਗਿਰਦੇ ਕੇ ਪਹਾੜਾ ਕਾ ਈਹਾਂ ਸੈਂ ਹੀ ਬੰਦਬਸਤ ਕਰੀਏਗਾ ॥ ਫੇਰ ਸੋਢੀਆਂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਂ ਕੋ ਕਹਾ ਜੋ ਫੌਜ ਰਾਖ ਲੇਵੋ ॥ ਤੇ ਮਕਾਨਾਂ ਮੈ ਬਾਰੂਦ ਸੀਸਾ ਆਪ ਡਲਵਾਇ ਕੇ ਕਾਇਮੀ ਕਰੁਵਾਇ ਦਈ ॥ ਫੇਰ ਉਨਕੇ ਪਾਸ ਕੁਸੁਕੁ ਫੌਜ ਛੋਡੀ ॥

[46] Ibid, f 109b :

ਅਹਿਮਦਸਾਹ ਬਾਦਸਾਹ ਨੇ ਦਰਬਾਰ ਕੋ ਮਿਸਮਾਰ ਕਰਾ ਸਾ ॥ ਫੇਰਿ ਅਬਿ ਆਪ ਨੇ ਇਮਾਰਤ ਸੁਰੂ ਕਰੀ । ਤੇ ਭਾਈ ਦੇਸ ਰਾਜ ਦਰੋਗਾ ਕਰਾ ॥ ਤੇ ਗਿਰੰਥੀ ਤੇ ਅਰਦਾਸੀਏ ਤੇ ਮੁਸੱਦੀ ਅਰੁ ਖਜਾਨਚੀ ਤੇ ਦਰੋਗੇ ਆਪ ਤਈਨਾਬ ਕੀਏ ॥ ਅਰੁ ਏਹ ਮਕਾਨ ਅੰਬ੍ਰਤਸਰ ਜੀ ਕਾ ਗਿਰਵੀ ਪੜਾ ਹੂਆ ਸਾ ॥ ਸਾਹਬ ਰਾ ਨੁਸਹਿਰੀਏ ਪਾਸ ॥

back the stipulated sum,[47] and appointed Bhai Des Raj as the *darogha* or incharge of the construction work. He also appointed the *mutasaddis*, *ardasias* and *granthis* for Harmandir. He also laid out the plan for the town and allotted sites to various *sardars* for the construction of *katras* and *bungas*.[48]

To make Amritsar a flourishing centre of trade Jassa Singh constructed numerous shops, and also persuaded the Nauhria shopkeepers, *seths* and bankers, and the commission agents of Jagraon to settle in Amritsar. The Rai of Jagraon was directed to help in this matter. These shopkeepers were allotted shops on coming to Amritsar. Conditions of peace and security and minimal custom duties induced many traders from other places to settle in Amritsar. Jassa Singh is also said to have built the Guru ka Katra and a fort, appointing Gulab Singh as its *thanadar*.[49] After many years, when Bhai Des Raj presented accounts of the money spent over the reconstruction of Amritsar, it amounted to fourteen lakhs of rupees.[50]

We do not get any clear idea about the income of Jassa Singh. The author, however, describes the distribution of his

[47] Ram Sukh Rao, *Jassa Singh Binod*, f 210a:

ਤਾਂ ਉਸ ਕੋ ਰੁਪਏ ਕੇ ਕਰ ਛੁਡਾਇਆ ॥

[48] Ibid, f 109b:

ਤੇ ਸਰਦਾਰੋਂ ਕੋ ਕਟਿੜਿਆਂ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਅਰੁ ਹਵੇਲੀਆਂ ਕੋ ਤੇ ਬੁੰਗਿਆਂ ਕੋ ਜਮੀਨ ਬਾਂਟ ਦਈ।

[49] Ibid, f 210b:

ਤੇ ਜਗਰਾਵੀਂ ਨਹੁਰੀਆ ਕੀਆਂ ਦੁਕਾਨਾ ਸੀਆਂ ਸੇਠਾਂ ਸਾਹੂਕਾਰਾਂ ਕੇ ਗੁਮਾਸਤੇ ॥ ਤਾਂ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੇ ਪਰਵਾਨੇ ਨੌਹੁਰੀਆ ਕੋ ਲਿਖੇ। ਤੇ ਰਾਇ ਕੋ ਭੀ ਜੋ ਇਨਕੋ ਈਹਾਂ ਹਾਜਰ ਕਰ ਦੇਵੇਂ। ਤਾਂ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੇ ਦੁਕਾਨਾ ਜੋ ਆਪ ਤੀਆਰ ਕਰੁਵਾਈਆ ਸੀਆਂ ॥ ਸੋ ਉਨ ਕੇ ਸਾਪੁਰਦ ਹੂਈਆਂ। ਤੇ ਇਸੀ ਵਜਾ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਜਾਗਾਂ ਸੀਂ ਭੀ ਸਾਹੂਕਾਰ ਉਮਦਾ ਮੰਗਵਾਏ।......ਤੇ ਕਿਲਾ ਅਰੁ ਕਟੜਾ ਭੀ ਤੀਆਰ ਹੂਆ ਬਡੀ ਜਲਦੀ। ਤੇ ਗੁਲਾਬ ਸਿੰਘ ਕੋ ਠਾਣੇਦਾਰੀ ਸਾਪੁਰਦ ਹੂਈ ॥ ...ਤੇ ਮਾਸੂਲ ਕੀ ਰਿਆਂਇਤੇ ਹੂਈ ਤਾਂ ਸਾਹੂਕਾਰ ਉਮਦਾ ਉਮਦਾ ਆਬਾਦ ਹੂਏ।

[50] Ibid, f 109b:

ਫੇਰ ਕਿਤਨੇ ਕੁ ਸਾਲਾਂ ਥੀ ਬਾਦ ਜੋ ਪੂਛਾ ਤਾਂ ਚੌਦਾਂ ਲਾਖ ਰੁਪਈਯਾ ਇਮਾਰਤ ਕੀ ਲਗਾਇਤ ਆਇਆ ॥

income at two places.[51] Accordingly, Jassa Singh's income was spent as under : firstly, a part of it was set aside for offering in the name of Narain and Guruji and it was sent to the sacred places associated with the Sikh Gurus; for the construction of Harmandir; and for the Sodhis of Anandpur.[52] A portion was distributed among the Akalis, and some money went to the paupers.[53] Then the *sardars* present in the *dera* were paid their share; the courtiers and the *jagirdars* were paid for meeting out their expenses; the *musahibs* and the army were paid their salaries; the rest was kept by the Ahluwalia chief himself.[54]

On the basis of Ram Sukh Rao's presentation of Jassa Singh's image and his activites and exploits, it is possible to form some idea of the author's purposes in writing *Jassa Singh Binod*. His purposes appear to be three. Firstly, like all court chroniclers of the period, he provides royal lineage to his patron. He traces Fateh Singh's geneology from Chandarvans and connects Jassa Singh with the 'royal' house of Jaisalmer. Secondly, to legitimize the succession of Fateh Singh's father Bhag Singh which had been stubbornly disputed

51 Ram Sukh Rao, *Jassa Singh Binod*, ff 129 & 161b.

52 Ibid, f 161b :

ਅਰੁ ਜਹਾਂ ਸੈ ਮਾਮਲਾ ਆਵਤਾ ਸਾਂ ਤਾ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਇਸ ਵਜਾ ਕਰਤੇ ਸੇ । ਅਵੱਲ ਤੋਂ ਨਾਰਾਇਣ ਜੀ ਕੇ ਅਰੁ ਗੁਰਾਂ ਕੀ ਨਜਰ ਕਾ ਜੁਦਾ ਰਾਖ ਲੈਣਾ । ਅਰੁ ਓਹੁ ਗੁਰਾਂ ਕੀਆਂ ਜਾਗਾਂ ਪੁਚਾਵਣਾਂ ।

53 Ibid, f 129b :

ਫੇਰ ਅਕਾਲੀ ਤੇ ਆਜਜਾ ਕੋ ਬਖਸਤੇ ਸੇ ॥ ਅਰੁ ਹਰਿਮੰਦਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਕੀ ਇਮਾਰਤ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਰਖਾਇ ਲੇਤੇ ਸੇ । ਤੇ ਆਨੰਦਪੁਰੀਆਂ ਸੋਢੀਆਂ ਕੋ ਭੀ ਪੁਚਾ ਕਰ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਭੀ ਲੈਤੇ ਸੇ ।

54 Ibid, f 161b :

ਫੇਰ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਜੋਨਸੈ ਲਸਕਰ ਮੈ ਹੋਵੇਂ । ਉਨ ਕੋ ਪੁਚਾਵਣਾ ॥ ਅਰੁ ! ਹੋਰ ਮਿਸਲਦਾਰ ਤੇ ਜਾਗੀਰਦਾਰੋਂ ਕੋਂ ਭੀ ਖਰਚ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਬਖਸਣਾ ॥ ਅਰੁ ਮੁਸਾਹਿਬਾਂ ਕੋ ਅਰੁ ਫੋਜ ਕੋ ਭੀ ਬਖਸਣਾ ।

by the sons of Jassa Singh's daughter with the support of her mother, the wife of Jassa Singh.[55]

Finally, there appears to be some connection between Fateh Singh's position at the time of the writing of *Jassa Singh Binod* and the whole stance and tone of the work. Ram Sukh Rao appears to be conscious of the indignity suffered by his patron recently at the hands of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. He is keen to redeem his master's loss of face over the Jagraon episode of 1825-26 by presenting Fateh Singh's ancestor in glorified lights.[56] Thus, he takes pains to project Jassa Singh as the supreme commander of the Sikh forces fighting against Ahmad Shah Abdali; as a patron of the premier shrines of the Sikhs, and constructing and rehabilitating Amritsar and Anandpur; as administering *pauhal* to the Patiala Rajas and others; and as treating the contemporary Sikh *sardars* as his vassals. In short, Jassa Singh, as presented by Ram Sukh Rao, was the 'Malik of the Panth', and thus nearly mirrored Ranjit Singh's position in the 1830s, at the time of the writing of *Jassa Singh Binod*.

55 Mai Raj Kaur (wife of Jassa Singh) wanted Mohar Singh, her son-in-law, to succeed Jassa Singh. Jassa Singh had no living male heir; his son had died in infancy. According to Ram Sukh Rao, Jassa Singh had nominated Bhag Singh, his grand nephew in his life time, and important Sikh *sardars* had recognized Bhag Singh as his successor. Mai Raj Kaur could not reconcile with this, and she encouraged Mohar Singh to foment rebellion against Bhag Singh : *Jassa Singh Binod*, ff 217b, 218a-219b, 248b, & 249a; Joginder Kaur (ed), *Fateh Singh Partap Prabhakar*, f 62b & nn 4-5.

56 Maharaja Ranjit Singh had sent a strong force under Budh Singh Sandhanwalia to Kapurthala. On hearing this Fateh Singh Ahluwalia fled over to Jagraon in December 1825 and sought the protection of the British. The British admitted Fateh Singh's claims of protection for his ancestral cis-Satlej estates. The British ultimately persuaded Fateh Singh to return to Kapurthala assuring him of Ranjit Singh's good will. Ranjit Singh also signed an *ahadnama* at Amritsar : see Joginder Kaur (ed), *Fateh Singh Partap Prabhakar*, ff 323a-332b & 337a-339b.

Khushwaqt Rai's Tarikh-i-Sikhan

Raghubir Singh*

In the Sikh History Research Library of Khalsa College, Amritsar, there is a manuscript bearing the title *Tarikh-i-Sikhan*.[1] It is possible that this title was added by the copyist. The name of the author is also given : Khushwaqt Rai. In the body of the text, however, the author does not mention his name. Several other copies of this work are also in existence.[2] The title *Kitab-i-Tawarikh-i-Panjab* is also given to this work.[3] H.T. Prinsep, the first British historian to make some use of this work in his *Origin of the Sikh Power in the Punjab and the Political Life of Maharaja Ranjit Singh* in the early 1830s, attributes it to Khushwaqt Rai and tells us that the original manuscript had been handed over by the author to Colonel David Ochterlony who transmitted it to Charles Metcalfe.[4]

The author of the *Tarikh-i-Sikhan* mentions in the beginning of his work that he was in the employment of the East India Company as an intelligencer *(waqai-nigar)* and that he had been asked by Colonel Ochterlony to write an account of the

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1 MS, SHR 1274, Sikh History Research Department, Khalsa College, Amritsar. Another manuscript, No. 116, is also a copy of this work.

2 For example, Persian MSS, M/420, M/800 & M/904, Punjab State Archives, Patiala; Ganda Singh, *A Select Bibliography of the Sikhs and Sikhism*, Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Amritsar 1965, 434-35.

3 Ganda Singh, *A Select Bibliography of the Sikhs and Sikhism*, 302.

4 H.T. Prinsep, *Origin of the Sikh Power in the Punjab and Political Life of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, Punjab Languages Department, Patiala 1971 (reprint—first published 1834), x.

sect of the Sikhs' *(firqa-i-Sikhan)* and their prophets *(paighambaran-i-ishan)*.[5] We know from other sources that Khushwaqt Rai was appointed at Amritsar after the Treaty of Amritsar was signed between the East India Company and Maharaja Ranjit Singh in April 1809.[6] In 1810, the military post of the East India Company at Ludhiana was converted into a Political Agency under the charge of Colonel Ochterlony. The author of the *Tarikh-i-Sikhan* tells us that he was asked to write his work in 1811.[7] We may safely conclude that the work in question was written by Khushwaqt Rai.

Khushwaqt Rai's *Tarikh-i-Sikhan* reveals many a feature of the medieval Indo-Persian chronicle. He starts with the Muslim formula of invocation, and begins his work with the praise of God and a brief identification of himself.[8] He demonstrates his familiarity with *ayat* and proverbs, which he uses in his work to make his prose more tasteful. Inclusion of interesting anecdotes in his account may be partly attributed to his desire for making the work an interesting piece of literature. From his familiarity with Persian classics and his command over Persian, we can infer that he had been given good education according to the standards of his time. On the whole, his work has a good standard of style and language which may be expected from a chronicler brought up on Persian classics and Indo-Persian historiography.

Only at two places in his work does Khushwaqt Rai refer to his sources. His information on the geographical situation of the Punjab, and its five Doabs, is certainly based on old official sources, though no source is specifically mentioned.[9] Similarly, his information regarding the total number of *mahal* in the Punjab and its total revenue is coming from

5 Khushwaqt Rai, *Tarikh-i-Sikhan*, SHR 1274, 2.

6 J.W. Beale, *An Oriental Biographical Dictionary*, Kalyani Publishers, Ludhiana 1972 (reprint), 219.

7 Khushwaqt Rai, *Tarikh-i-Sikhan*, SHR 1274, 1.

8 Loc cit.

9 Ibid, 83.

official records.[10] For contemporary and near contemporary situation he could gather a lot of information personally, besides collecting relevant materials from others.[11] That much of his account was based on personal observation is evident from his work.[12]

Khushwaqt Rai's *Tarikh-i-Sikhan* runs into 283 pages. This work can be divided broadly into three parts. Less than a third of the work deals with the period from Guru Nanak to the establishment of Sikh rule in the 1760s. Over forty pages of this portion are given to the Sikh Gurus. About ten pages are devoted to Banda Bahadur. To the political struggle of the Singhs of Guru Gobind Singh under the Mughal governors first and then against the Afghans are given about thirty pages. The second part may be seen as devoted to the Sikh and non-Sikh chiefs of the region between the Indus and the Jamuna. A little more than one-third of the manuscript, about 100 pages, is given to this part. In the third part, which too is of nearly 100 pages, Khushwaqt Rai concentrates his attention on Maharaja Ranjit Singh, after giving brief accounts of Charhat Singh and Mahan Singh.

We can see that Khushwaqt Rai's main interest was in the immediate past and that too primarily in the rulers. For this purpose, it was necessary for him to include the non-Sikh chiefs in his account, though the space given to them is far less than the space devoted to the Sikh chiefs in the second part of the work. In fact, he appears in this part to provide a background for the rise of Ranjit Singh in the west of the Satlej and the establishment of British control in the east of the Satlej. This kind of information could be useful to the East India Company.

From the historical point of view, Khushwaqt Rai's work is of great importance. He supplies information on the early career and achievement of Maharaja Ranjit Singh which is not

10 Khushwaqt Rai, *Tarikh-i-Sikhan*, SHR 1274, 84-85

11 Ibid, 33, 35 & 44-45.

12 Ibid, 152-53.

available elsewhere. He was keen to get information on the military strength and resources of Maharaja Ranjit Singh who by this time had established himself as the paramount power in the central Punjab and was launched upon the more ambitious task of extending his dominions over the whole of the Punjab. Khushwaqt Rai supplies a graphic account of Metcalfe's mission to Maharaja Ranjit Singh in about 25 pages.[13]

Though Khushwaqt Rai had no appreciation for Sikh rule in general, he is appreciative of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. His veneration for Ranjit Singh sprang largely from a deep, perhaps unconscious, respect for established authority. Ranjit Singh had consolidated his position in the central Punjab and appeared to have the capacity to create an empire for himself. Furthermore, after the Treaty of Amritsar he had been recognized as a formidable force among the Indian rulers. Khushwaqt Rai was quite anxious to furnish more information on the military strength, disposition and resources of Maharaja Ranjit Singh to his patrons. His account of Ranjit Singh is particularly valuable not only because he supplies some fresh information on him but also because of his almost detached moral attitude towards him.

It may be pointed out that nowhere in his work Khushwaqt Rai uses the term *misl*. He feels more concerned with individuals and areas than with groups or associations. For him, the Khalsa were merely an aggregate of individual *sardars*. Though he assumes some sort of grouping among them, he does not attach any importance to the organization called *misl*. Khushwaqt Rai's silence is not without significance. He was writing at a time when the supposed *misls* were coming to an end. His silence betokens the absence of any confederacies.

N.K. Sinha regards the *Tarikh-i-Sikhan* as 'an excellent contemporary source' for the early history of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, particularly for the years from 1797 to 1811. In fact, Sinha regards Khushwaqt Rai's manuscript as 'more important' than

[13] Khushwaqt Rai, *Tarikh-i-Sikhan*, SHR 1274, 232-60.

the work of Sohan Lal Suri.[14] N.K. Sinha may be right. But to come to any definite conclusion on this issue it is necessary to compare the two works in detail in the light of all available evidence on the early history of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. For the present it can be said that for sheer detail of information Khushwaqt Rai does not lag behind Sohan Lal Suri. Incidentally, Sohan Lal's own work picks up the detail from the year 1812, while Khushwaqt Rai brings up his account to June 1811.

[14] N K. Sinha, *Ranjit Singh*, A. Mukherjee & Co., Calcutta 1968 (reprint). 201.

Subjugation of the Bhangis

Veena Sachdeva*

The Bhangi chiefs who ruled as independent rulers at the beginning of Ranjit Singh's reign were Chait Singh, son of Lehna Singh, at Lahore; Jodh Singh, son of Dhanna Singh Kalalwala, near Sialkot; Jassa Singh, son of Karam Singh Dulu, at Chiniot; Gurdit Singh, a descendant of Hari Singh Bhangi, at Amritsar; Karam Singh at his ancestral village Chhina; Jiwan Singh, Natha Singh, Sahib Singh and Mohar Singh Atariwala at Sialkot; Nar Singh at Chamiari; Bagh Singh at Hallowal; and Sahib Singh, son of Gujjar Singh, at Gujrat. These chiefs had not constituted a single political organization at any time in their history. However, at one time or another, their ancestors had combined their resources with Hari Singh, or with his successors, for the purpose of conquest and defence. From the very beginning these chiefs were independent in the internal administration of their territories and in their relations with other chiefs.

Ranjit Singh's first important conquest involving the Bhangis was that of Lahore in 1799. Ranjit Singh treated Chait Singh, one of the three rulers of Lahore, with much consideration; he became 'a *jagirdar* of 60,000 rupees per annum'.[1] He was

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[1] *Foreign/Political Progs,* 14 Jan 1853, No. 232; Sohan Lal, *Umdat ut-Tawarikh* (tr Amarwant Singh, seen in typescript), Daftar II, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 43; Aliuddin, *Ibratnama* (tr Gurbakhsh Singh, seen in typescript), Punjabi University, Patiala, 266; L.H. Griffin, *The Panjab Chiefs*, Lahore 1865, 394.

required to supply contingents to Ranjit Singh.[2] Sahib Singh, the other ruler of Lahore, lost his possessions in the city and its neighbourhood.

After establishing his authority over Lahore, Ranjit Singh cast his eyes on Bhera which was under Jodh Singh Kalalwala.[3] Hard pressed by Ranjit Singh, he escaped and took shelter with Sahib Singh of Gujrat who was his father-in-law.[4] The latter gave him the *ilaqa* of Karianwala in Gujrat. In 1806-07 Ranjit Singh again attacked Jodh Singh and compelled him to make complete submission. He was asked to pay a *nazrana* of 5,000 rupees and was allowed to retain his former estates of Kalalwala, Maharajke, Panwana and Chaubara worth 60,000 rupees on condition of service.[5]

After Jodh Singh's expulsion from Bhera, Ranjit Singh had marched to occupy Chiniot which was under Jassa Singh Dulu who was married to Sahib Singh's sister. He was besieged in the fort. Through Fateh Singh Kalianwala the surrender was successfully negotiated. Ranjit Singh assigned to the subjugated chief a *jagir* worth 50,000 rupees for maintenance.[6]

Ranjit Singh's next important acquisition was Amritsar. The city was at this time held by Mai Sukhan, the widow of Gulab Singh who had died during the battle of Bhasin in 1800.[7] Her

2 Ahmad Shah, *Tarikh-i-Hind*, 410, quoted in Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, Manohar Publications, New Delhi 1978, 141n87.

3 G. Ousley and W.G. Davies, *Report on the Revised Settlement of the Shahpoor District in the Rawalpindi Division 1866* (subsequent references to all the settlement reports are prefixed by SR and written as *SR Shahpur*), Lahore, nd, 39.

4 Ganesh Das, *Char Bagh-i-Panjab* (tr Amarwant Singh, seen in typescript), Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 148.

5 Munshi Amin Chand, *A History of the Sialkot District* (tr Charles A. Roe), Central Jail Press, Lahore 1874, 11; L.H. Griffin *The Panjab Chiefs*, 368-69

6 *Foreign/Political Progs*. 29 December 1849, No. 47 A; Sohan Lal, *Umdat ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar II, 54; H.T. Prinsep, *Origin of the Sikh Power*, The 'Sun' Printing Works, Calcutta 1897 (2nd ed), 42; E.B. Steedman, *SR Jhang, 1874-80*, Lahore 1882, 38.

7 Gulab Singh and Sahib Singh were not reconciled to the occupation of Lahore by Ranjit Singh. A combination was formed against him in 1800.

son Gurdit Singh was a minor. Ranjit Singh attacked the city and took it by assault. Mai Sukhan, with her son Gurdit Singh, took shelter with Jodh Singh Ramgarhia. On the latter's request they got their ancestral village Panjwar with four other villages in *jagir*. Gurdit Singh was placed under Hari Singh Nalwa as a *'panj-sawar'*, rendering service with five horsemen.[8]

Karam Singh Chhina, who was holding Firozke, Kaleki, Rurki and Bajra near Sialkot, besides Chhina near Amritsar, was now deprived of his territories. Ranjit Singh gave Chhina, Nagrau and Firozke, worth 50,000 rupees, back to him in *jagir*, subject to the service of seventy horsemen.[9]

About 1807 Ranjit Singh turned his attention towards the fort and city of Sialkot. The reason assigned for its occupation was the refusal of Jiwan Singh to accept his suzerainty.[10] Ranjit Singh marched to occupy Sialkot. Mohar Singh Atariwala, one of the chiefs of Sialkot, saw resistance useless and submitted. Ranjit Singh occupied his fort and fixed his guns to bombard the fort of Sialkot.[11] Jiwan Singh defended

Under the leadership of Gulab Singh a large force was collected with the support of Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, Nizamuddin Khan of Qasur Jassa Singh Dulu, Jodh Singh Kalalwala, Bagh Singh Hallowalia and Nar Singh Chamiari as well as Sahib Singh. The allied troops met the forces of Ranjit Singh at Bhasin, between Lahore and Amritsar. A few petty engagements were fought which proved to be disastrous for the Bhangis. Meanwhile, Gulab Singh fell ill and died. The allied chiefs dispersed without any further action : see Sohan Lal, *Umdat ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar II, 46; Ganesh Das, *Char Bagh-i-Panjab*, 142; Ahmad Shah, *Tarikh-i-Panjab* (a portion of his *Tarikh-i-Hind*, tr Gurbakhsh Singh), Punjabi University, Patiala 1969, 70-71; Gian Singh, *Raj Khalsa*, Vol III, Punjab Languages Department, Patiala 1970 (reprint), 7.

[8] Aliuddin, *Ibratnama*, 253; V.N. Datta, *Amritsar : Past and Present*, The Municipal Committee, Amritsar 1967, 24-25; Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, 141 n87.

[9] Ganesh Das, *Char Bagh-i-Panjab*, 323; Munshi Amin Chand, *A History of the Sialkot District*, 11; L.H. Griffin, *The Panjab Chiefs*, 373-74.

[10] S.M. Latif, *History of the Panjab*, Eurasia Publishing House, New Delhi 1964 (reprint — first published 1889), 371.

[11] Sohan Lal, *Umdat ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar II, 67-68.

the fort for seven days, but one of the gates of the fort was battered down by the fire of the besiegers, which enabled them to enter and occupy it. With the mediacy of Fateh Singh Ahluwalia, Jiwan Singh got sufficient *jagir* for maintenance.[12] Natha Singh, another chief, was given ten villages in *jagir*.[13]

Nar Singh Chamiari had submitted to Ranjit Singh in 1804. He had been allowed to remain in possession of his territories but on terms of vassalage.[14] He died in 1806. His sons being minor, Ranjit Singh took possession of the greater portion of the family estates, including Nar Singh's share in Sialkot and the *ta'alluqas* of Saddowal, Ghaniwala and Chamiari. His widows and his sons were left with only a small portion of their territory.[15]

Bagh Singh Hallowalia had submitted to Ranjit Singh in 1804. However, he too had been allowed to remain in possession of his territories on terms of vassalage.[16] Towards the end of 1810 Ranjit Singh came to know that Bagh Singh had helped Nidhan Singh Hattu of Daska against his wishes. Bhag Singh was arrested and put in chains; all his territories were annexed.[17] In December 1810, however, Bagh Singh was set at liberty and given Qila Sobha Singh, Qila Suba Singh, Changi-Changa and Budha Goraya, most probably for maintenance.[18]

By now, Sahib Singh of Gujrat, who was the most powerful Bhangi chief ten years earlier, was much weakened and completely isolated. Expeditions had been sent against him in 1801

12 *SR Sialkot.1888-95*, Lahore 1895,13.

13 Ram Sukh Rao, *Sri Fateh Singh Partap Prabhakar* (ed Joginder Kaur), Ph.D. Thesis, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar 1978, f 138b.

14 Ganesh Das, *Char Bagh-i-Panjab*, 146.

15 Khuswaqt Rai, *Tarikh-i-Sikhan* (tr Milkhi Ram Kushan, seen in typescript), Punjabi University, Patiala, 130; L.H. Griffin, *The Panjab Chiefs*, 208; Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, 23.

16 Ganesh Das, *Char Bagh-i-Panjab*, 146.

17 S.M. Latif, *History of the Panjab*, 288.

18 Ahmad Shah, *Tarikh-i-Panjab*, 82; Munshi Amin Chand, *A History of the Sialkot District*, 10-11; S.M. Latif, *History of the Panjab*,389; *Sialkot District Gazetteer, 1921*, 21.

and 1802, and he was obliged to pay *nazrana*.[19] In 1807, Sahib Singh sent his refusal to join the vassals of Ranjit Singh in an expedition. Ranjit Singh marched to punish him for this contumacy. Before he reached Gujrat, Sahib Singh's agents met him and paid a large sum of money as tribute. They also furnished a written undertaking acknowledging Sahib Singh's allegiance to the Maharaja.[20] Ranjit Singh remained eager to occupy his territories. He got the opportunity when a quarrel arose between Sahib Singh and his son Gulab Singh. On the latter's request Ranjit Singh got the forts of Jalalpur and Islamgarh evacuated. Gujrat was also occupied later on. Sahib Singh fled to Deva Batala.[21] In 1810, however, he was recalled with the mediacy of Fateh Singh Ahluwalia. Sahib Singh was now given the *tappa* of Bajwat for maintenance.[22] He was the last Bhangi chief to fall.

In the course of the decline and fall of the Bhangi chiefs their *jagirdars* became the *jagirdars* of Ranjit Singh. Important among them were Nihal Singh Atariwala and Tek Singh Atariwala's sons Hukam Singh and Jagat Singh. Ranjit Singh gave them adequate *jagirs*. Nihal Singh Atariwala was placed in command of 416 horsemen, one gun and seven camel swivels. He was also given villages worth 54,500 rupees in *jagir*, and later on Pasrur worth a lakh of rupees was added.[23] Hukam Singh and Jagat Singh also received appropriate *jagirs*.[24] Karam

19 S.M. Latif, *History of the Panjab*, 34; Ram Sukh Rao, *Sri Fateh Singh Partap Prabhakar*, f 91ab & nn 122-123; Sohan Lal, *Umdat ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar II, 51-52.

20 Sohan Lal, *Umdat ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar II, 69; S.M. Latif, *History of the Panjab*, 370; Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, 60.

21 *Punjab Government Records, 1808-15*, II, 169; Ganesh Das, *Char Bagh-i-Panjab*, 152; W.L. M'Gregor, *History of the Sikhs*, Punjab Languages Department, Patiala 1970, I, 126-27.

22 Ram Sukh Rao, *Sri Fateh Singh Partap Prabhakar*, f 237a; Ganesh Das *Char Bagh-i-Panjab*, 134. Cf Ahmad Shah, *Tarikh-i-Panjab*, 44-45; L.H. Griffin, *The Panjab Chiefs*, 395.

23 *Foreign/Political Progs*, 29 December 1849 No. 47 A.

24 Ganesh Das, *Char Bagh-i-Panjab*, 147.

Singh Chahal, a *jagirdar* of the Lahore rulers, submitted to Ranjit Singh after some hesitation. The Maharaja gave him several villages in Ajnala.[25] Jai Singh Kamla, son of Godh Singh Kamla, who had been serving Gulab Singh Bhangi, joined Ranjit Singh after the occupation of Lahore. His earlier *jagir* of 50,000 rupees was increased to 78,025 rupees by Ranjit Singh.[26] Ram Singh Isapuria, who too had served Gulab Singh Bhangi, joined Ranjit Singh's service in 1804. He was confirmed in his villages and also given additional *jagirs* to the value of 5 lakhs of rupees subject to the service of 700 horsemen and 2,000 infantry.[27] Ratan Singh Panjwaria, a *jagirdar*, and also the brother-in-law of Jassa Singh Dulu, was similarly treated and given *jagirs*.[28]

In retrospect, we can see that the territories of seven out of ten chiefs were directly annexed by Ranjit Singh by means of warfare. Two of them, Nar Singh Chamiari and Bagh Singh Hallowalia, were made tributary before their territories were annexed. Sahib Singh too was reduced to vassalage first, and his territories were annexed after some time. All of them, including their dependants and *jagirdars*, were treated with consideration. Half of them were given *jagirs* for maintenance; and half of them were made service *jagirdars*.

If we compare Ranjit Singh's treatment of the Bhangi chiefs with the treatment he meted out to other Sikh and non-Sikh chiefs, we notice a certain degree of uniformity in Ranjit Singh's attitude. The subjugated chiefs, whether Sikhs or Muhammadans, of hills or plains, were generally made vassals before their territories were annexed. In fact, Ranjit Singh's 'general policy was to claim suzerainty over autonomous chiefs as a prelude to the annexation of their territories'.[29] He

[25] *Foreign/Political Progs*, 14 January 1853, No. 132.

[26] *Foreign/Political Consultation*, 29 December 1849, No. 47 A.

[27] L.H. Griffin, *The Panjab Chiefs*, 217.

[28] *Foreign/Political Progs*, 29 December 1849, No. 47 A.

[29] Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, 57.

assigned respectable *jagirs* to the heads of the dispossessed families and also gave them honourable appointments in administration or in the army, making use of the familiar institutions of vassalage and *jagirdari*.

Territorial Organization : Concept of State Role and Distribution of Power

Fauja Singh*

Territorially speaking, the kingdom of Punjab had several divisions and subdivisions of varying sizes. At the primary level there were *subas* and in areas where there were no *subas* there were large districts. The *subas* were three in number, namely, Darul Aman Multan, Jannat Nazir Kashmir and Peshawar.[1] The large districts which did not really fall under any *suba* were Kangra, Jullundur Doab, Majha, Wazirabad, Jhang, Pind Dadan Khan, Gujrat, Rajauri, Punchh, Hazara, Bannu-Kohat-Tank, Dera Ismail Khan and Dera Ghazi Khan.[2]

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1 Diwan Amar Nath refers to the *suba* of Punjab and to the *suba* of Lahore as well : see *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh* (ed Sita Ram Kohli), University of the Punjab, Lahore 1928, chaps VI & XXXIX. Similar references are found in the *Khalsa Darbar Records* : see Sita Ram Kohli (ed), *Catalogue of Khalsa Darbar Records*, Lahore 1927, II, 13, 21, 27, 34, 98, 107, 137 & 161. However, even if it is admitted that this *suba* was treated as a separate territorial division, it is to be distinguished from the other *subas*. It was under the direct administration of Ranjit Singh himself and there was no separate single *nazim* earmarked for it as was the case with the other three *subas*. Rather, it was divided up into *ilaqas* and each one of them usually was placed under the charge of a *nazim*.

2 Such a district was larger than a *pargana* and smaller than a *suba*, something intermediate between the *pargana* and the *suba*. Under the Mughals probably there was no such unit and the *suba* of Lahore, or any *suba* for that matter, was divided into *parganas* and then into smaller units coming down to the *mauza* (village). Under Ranjit Singh, a new situation arose as until 1818 his whole kingdom was little more than the erstwhile Mughal *suba* of

Whether *subas* or districts, they were all governed by *nazims* who naturally did not enjoy the same status and powers. The secondary level was composed of *parganas* which also widely differed in size depending upon whether they fell within a big *suba* or a mere district. Between the *pargana* and the village which was the lowest unit, there were a few other units, such as *tappa* and *tope*. The number of *tappas* in a *pargana* varied with its size. The *pargana* of Pharwala in the Sind Sagar Doab had four *tappas*; Dangli had eight and Rohtas fourteen. The *pargana* of Bahlolpur in the Chaj Doab had seven *tappas;* Gujrat had eight; Shahjahanpur also had eight and Herat had seven. The *pargana* of Ban in the Rachna Doab had five *tappas;* Arina had two; Eminabad eleven and Shaikhupura eight.[3]

Just as the number of tappas in a *pargana* varied from *pargana* to *pargana*, so did the number of *topes* in a *tappa* vary from *tappa* to *tappa*.[4] In the *tappa* of Akya in the *pargana* of Gujrat, for instance, there were five *topes*; in Bala there were three; in Kandu six and in Handu three. In the *tappa* of Jiv Waraich in the *pargana* of Herat there were eighteen *topes* and in the *tappa* of Helan only eight. The *tappa-i-Akbari* in the *pargana* of Eminabad had five *topes;* Waraich and Cheema had eight; Khanpur Chautra had six; and *tappa-i-Alamgiri* two

Lahore. Whereas he was the supreme ruler of his territories he felt the need of creating a new territorial unit which should be larger than the size of the *pargana*. It is not definite what name was given to this new unit but on the basis of some references found in the contemporary accounts it may be said that the term used first was *ilaqa*. This term was in use even before but mostly in the geographical sense. Under the Sikhs it acquired a new connotation and came to represent a new administrative division.

3 J. S. Grewal and Indu Banga (tr & ed), *Early Nineteenth Century Panjab*, Guru Nanak (Dev) University, Amritsar 1975, 18, 51 & 52.

4 Ibid, 18 & 52. Ganesh Das's *Char Bagh-i-Panjab* (Persian) is full of information on the subject of *parganas, tappas, topes, chaklas* and *ta'alluqas*. Since Ganesh Das himself was working in the revenue department, the information supplied by him is most authentic and dependable. This work was completed in 1849 and first published by Khalsa College, Amritsar in 1965.

topes. Similarly the number of villages in a *tope* varied from place to place. In some cases a single village constituted a *tope*, or even a *tappa*. Generally, however, a *tope* contained two to three villages. Like the *pargana* and the *tappa*, the *tope* was also an administrative and fiscal unit.

Ganesh Das, author of *Char Bagh-i-Panjab*, has also referred to *ta'alluqas*, *chaklas* and *mahal* in this context. He has not, however, explained them, or stated how they are to be distinguished from the other units, namely, *parganas*, *tappas* and *topes*. He seems to have taken it for granted that they are common terms and are easily understood. This might be the case when the book was written but things are different now. Still if we go through the text carefully something may be made out about each one of these terms by way of explanation. *Ta'alluqa* and *pargana* do not appear to be interchangeable terms if we read Ganesh Das carefully. That the two are not the same will be clear when, for instance, we find Ganesh Das speaking in the same breath of one place being a *ta'alluqa* and another a *pargana*.[5] Take these lines of his for example: 'Nagrota is a large village and Gharota is a small *ta'alluqa*. Shahpur is a place on the bank of the river Ravi. Taragarh is the name of *ta'alluqa*. Bahrampur is a *pargana*'. As regards the actual distinction between the two, a surmise can be ventured on the basis of Ganesh Das's own account in *Char-Bagh-i-Panjab*. First, a *ta'alluqa* is smaller in size than a *pargana* though all *ta'alluqas*, like all *parganas*, were not of uniform size.[6] Secondly, whereas there were lower subdivisions like *tappas* and *topes* in a *pargana*, a *ta'alluqa* had none of these. Thirdly, the number of *ta'alluqas* as compared with that of *pargana* was very small. Fourthly, as B.R. Grover has stated, a *ta'alluqa* was a single block of territory under the control and management of a *ta'alluqadar*, a kind of a landlord or *zamindar*, having some hereditary interest.[7]

5 Ganesh Das, *Char Bagh-i-Panjab*, 296.

6 Ibid, 219-20.

7 "Raqba-Bandi Documents of Akbar's Reign", *Proceedings Indian Historical Records Commission*, XXXVI, Part 2, 59-60 & nn 21-23.

Some other views on the use of the term *ta'alluqa* are there. J.S. Grewal and Indu Banga think that the two units, *ta'alluqa* and *pargana*, had become interchangeable.[8] S.R. Kohli regards *ta'alluqa* as a subdivision of *pargana*.[9] G.L. Chopra equates *pargana* with a district and *ta'alluqa* with a *tahsil* of the British times.[10] The confusion on this matter is further increased by the *Catalogue of Khalsa Darbar Records*, Vol. II, where the term *ta'alluqa* has been used somewhat indifferently.

Obviously it is a difficult problem to resolve the mystery, for which much more intensive research is needed, but it appears that the confusion has mostly arisen from the fact that the term has been used both in the technical and general sense. Technically it had a restricted connotation, probably the same as we have been able to make out from Ganesh Das's book and in a general use it may refer to any fiscal and administrative unit, *pargana*, *tappa* or *tope*.

Regarding *chakla* it has been observed that it meant the same thing as the term *tope*.[11] There are however some difficulties in admitting this thing. The *chaklas* of Gujrat and Jammu were even larger than *parganas* as for instance the *chakla* of Gujrat contained three *parganas* out of which the Gujrat *pargana* alone consisted of eight *tappas* and each *tappa* had a number of *topes*.[12] In another context a *chakla* is shown as a subdivision of a *tappa*. For example, it has been said that the Eminabad *pargana* had eleven *tappas* which in turn had several *chaklas* each. Out of them the *tappa* of Eminabad had nine *chaklas*, the *tappa* of Akbari had five *chaklas*, and so on and so forth. Obviously here the term *chakla* stands for a unit of territory smaller than a *tappa* but larger than a village.

8 Grewal and Banga, *Early Nineteenth Century Panjab*, 17.

9 "Land Revenue Administration under Maharajah Ranjit Singh", *Journal of the Panjab Historical Society*, VII, No. 1 (1918), 76.

10 *The Panjab as a Sovereign State*, VVRI, Hoshiarpur 1960 (2nd ed), 84.

11 Grewal and Banga, *Early Nineteenth Century Panjab*, 169-70.

12 Ganesh Das, *Char Bagh*, 169-70. For example, the Akya *tappa* had five *topes*; the Bala *tappa* had three *topes*; the Kandu *tappa* had six *topes*; and Handu *tappa* had three *topes*.

almost corresponding to the term *tope*. But the two terms do not appear to be interchangeable for the reason that whereas the term *tope* has been widely used in the work under reference, the term *chakla* has been mentioned very sparingly, only in cases, it seems, where the popular usage demanded it. Two things may be said on this point. One, certain blocks of territory were called *chaklas* probably because they had been thus called for a very long time now. The name had really originated in the Mughal times and may be, even earlier, and that name had become so firmly attached to them that it continued to persist through time. Secondly, like a *ta'alluqa* a *chakla* too might be under the control and management of single proprietor or a band of collaterals. It is also possible that some old fiscal units called *chaklas* continued into the Sikh period and they retained their old names. But these are no more than shrewd surmises. Anyhow, it is an important point to be probed that the term *chakla* has been used by Ganesh Das only in a few cases and not in others.

The next term to be explained is *mahal* which may be regarded as a legacy of the Mughal period even with a greater degree of appropriateness. It does not appear to be a separate fiscal unit in the Sikh times but certain areas like Sialkot, Gujrat, Pasrur and Aurangabad had once been called *mahal*, and in course of time, that name got so much attached to them that whenever they were spoken of, they were referred to as *mahal*, just as 'Darul Aman' and 'Jannat Nazir' coming down from the Mughal times continued to be used for Multan and Kashmir respectively in the period of Ranjit Singh. Since they were also retained as administrative and fiscal units, the use of the term *mahal* in connection with them was not dropped. In short, the term *mahal* was not commonly used in Sikh times but where it was used, it was probably used interchangeably with the term *pargana*.[13]

13 Grewal and Banga, *Early Nineteenth Century Panjab*, 90. Ganesh Das writes that the five *doabs* of the Sikh kingdom contained 316 *mahals* : *Char Bagh*, 157. Obviously here *mahals* are *parganas*. But this may not always be

But how to explain the phenomenon of such wide irregularities in the character of various territorial units of the state ? Of the factors that come to mind in this context the most important one may be the manner in which the state expanded. Ranjit Singh started almost from a scratch. His inheritance, the Sukarchakia Misl was one of the smallest Sikh principalities that had come into being during the last few decades of the eighteenth century. In terms of military strength it did not command more than two and a half thousand men, mostly cavalry soldiers. In terms of territory it possessed no more than a tiny stretch surrounding Gujranwala. Starting from this humble origin Ranjit Singh built up a vast kingdom through a series of conquests spread over more than half the period of his total reign. The piecemeal growth of the kingdom, however, had its deep impact on the organization of the state as a whole. Its armed forces, its administrative system and its territorial organization all grew up step by step — a process which inevitably involved a great deal of improvisation and experimentation. But ultimately this state of flux was over and a broad and more or less steady pattern made its appearance.

The territories between the Satlej and the Jehlam were the first to fall under the control of the Maharaja. Other conquests such as Multan, and Kashmir came after a gap of several years. The direct control of Peshawar territory was acquired still later — indeed not less than 14 years after it was first reduced and rendered tributary in 1820. The order in which these various tracts were conquered and annexed is not without significance. When the first conquests were made and until the boundaries of the state did not extend far beyond the Satlej in the east and the Jehlam in the west, the extent of the state was so small that it was treated almost as a single unit of administration under the direct control of the Maharaja himself. Still for convenience it was divided up into a number

the case because while speaking about the *pargana* of Bahlolpur, Ganesh Das uses the term *mahal* interchangeably with *tappas* : ibid, 168.

of large districts *(ilaqas)* each one of which was further divided into *parganas*. The most important of these districts were Jullundur Doab, Majha, Wazirabad, Jhang and Kangra.[14] For the purpose of administration there was a *nazim* for each district and a *kardar* for each *pargana*. The situation, however, changed with the annexation of Multan (1818) and Kashmir (1819). A departure from the old practice now became necessary and both of these new acquisitions were formed into full-fledged *subas* to be governed by *subadars* (*nazims*). The *suba* was divided into *parganas* to be administered by *kardars*. However, even when the new *subas* were formed, the existing pattern of the territories previously acquired was allowed to remain as it was before and no separate *suba* of Lahore in the strict sense of the term was formed. The formation of the *suba* of Peshawar in 1834 also made no difference in the situation in this respect.

However, the policy of creating large districts *(ilaqas)* did not altogether stop with the formation of the *subas* of Multan and Kashmir. Hazara was one of such areas, which was earmarked as a separate unit and placed under a *nazim*. It was not included in any of the neighbouring *subas* — Kashmir, Peshawar and Multan. Other such areas were the Punchh-Rajauri region, Dera Ghazi Khan, Dera Ismail Khan, Bannu-Tank. In all of these cases the character of local population and the peculiarity of geographical situation weighed heavily with the state government in making the decision.

In the case of *parganas, ta'alluqas, tappas, topes* and *chaklas* the emphasis was on retaining, as far as possible, the traditional fiscal and administrative units rather than on changing them. The reason was that most of these units had been formed on the basis of homogeneity of tribes and clans and they could not be easily disturbed. Still changes could not be avoided altogether. When the Sikh *misls* were established in the eighteenth century many of the *parganas* and *tappas*

14 The Pind Dadan Khan district, though across the river Jehlam, may also be included here as its acquisition really belonged to this early period.

were fragmented because being petty principalities they preferred to have smaller fiscal and administrative units. Moreover, there was also the problem of parcelling out territories to accommodate other *sardars* who had helped them in their military campaigns and who if unaccommodated might feel tempted to transfer their loyalties elsewhere without any compunctions. Under Ranjit Singh, too, many of these local units were reorganized depending upon the character of the population, geographical situation, administrative convenience and state interest. For instance, Sialkot used to be a very large *pargana* in the Mughal days. It was split and the *pargana* of Eminabad, Ban, Arina, Pasrur, Bahlolpur, Gujrat and Herat were created by detaching areas from it.[15] Gharat Khasa was a village in the hereditary proprietorship of Puri Khatris.[16] It had been separated from the *pargana* of Sialkot and included in the *chakla* of Gujrat in the time of Muhammad Shah. Afterwards, during the Sikh rule, it was attached to Wazirabad under Sardar Jodh Singh. In the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh a separate village was given to the proprietors of this place. Similarly the *tappa* of Alamgir was created by detaching villages from the *tappa* of Waraich in the *chakla* of Gujrat. Examples of this type could easily be multiplied.

In the historical situation of the early nineteenth century when the means of communications and transport in the Punjab were so slow and underdeveloped, the system of power there to a considerable extent depended upon its territorial organization and the prevalent concept of state functions. Distance from the capital, physical features and demographic character were some of the important factors which determined the place which a particular territorial unit was to occupy in the overall system of power in the kingdom of Ranjit Singh. Broadly speaking, three territorial zones may be identified from the point of view of the actual exercise of power. The

15 Ganesh Das, *Char Bagh*, 221.

16 Ibid, 246.

first zone is the core zone, the heartland of the Punjab, which extended, generally speaking, from the Satlej to the Jehlam. This was the first to be occupied and was the closest to the capital. Practically the whole of this zone had come under Ranjit Singh's control and management by 1810 or so. Later conquests made in West Punjab, specially between the Indus and the Jehlam, may be taken to constitute the intermediate zone which included the *subas* of Multan and Kashmir. The peripheral zone would be the third which comprised the territories on the borders of the kingdom, such as Peshawar, Hazara, Dera Ismail Khan, Dera Ghazi Khan and Bannu-Tank.

Ranjit Singh has been called the pivot around which the entire administration of his state revolved.[17] It is said that he was the real head of the state in whose hands all strings of power were concentrated. His extraordinary intelligence and extremely retentive memory enabled him to wield his authority in a manner that his ministers were left with practically little individual discretion and their main function was like faithful and efficient secretaries to carry out the orders of the master.[18] He was the chief executive authority, the highest court of justice and the chief legislator. The direction of affairs in the state lay entirely with him. In the words of Ganesh Das, 'he was not literate but he was so shrewd and intelligent that he could conduct the affairs of the state with efficiency without consulting or seeking anyone's advice'.[19]

Nevertheless, power could not be, and was not, excercised by the Maharaja in the same degree in all the three zones.

17 N.K. Sinha, *Ranjit Singh*, A. Mukherjee & Co., Calcutta 1960 (3rd ed), 139.

18 Ganesh Das Badhera thus writes about Ranjit Singh's memory : He had a wonderful memory. Any man he would meet once, he would recognize him even if he would come after ten years. The names of all towns and other places of the Punjab along with the revenue proceeds of each place were remembered by him; nay he remembered the names of most of the *chaudharis, qanungos, zamindars* and state officials : *Char Bagh*, 326; also 321.

19 Ibid, 329.

The position differed from zone to zone. The level of state control was maximum in the central zone and it decreased as one moved from there towards the peripheral zone through the intermediate zone. The central zone was the nearest to the capital so that every part of it was within easy access. The state Intelligence system was much better organized here and there was no difficulty about reports and official *parwanas* travelling about quickly and regularly. This was also the place best known to the Maharaja since he was constantly touring through the length and breadth of this portion and had everything under his close personal supervision.[20] The zone was divided into districts each under a *nazim*. But the *nazim* here stood no comparison with the *nazim* of the *subas* of Multan, Kashmir and Peshawar, who were all men of higher ranks. And then there was the ever present possibility that the Maharaja might turn up any time and see for himself how the local authorities were conducting themselves as also the affairs of their administrative units. And in the event of anything amiss being found, the guilty officials could be penalized. Next to the *nazims* were *kardars* in the districts. Like the *nazims* they were also centrally appointed with the result that the *nazims* and *kardars* could be checks upon each other.[21]

In the intermediate zone the position was different. The *subas* of Multan and Kashmir which fell in this zone were far removed from the capital and were not within easy access of the centre. The Maharaja did not visit Kashmir even once and his visits to Multan and other places in that *suba* were also very rare. Consequently, the factor of the king's personal supervision over the administrative affairs in these places did not operate as vigorously as it did in the central zone. The *nazims* of these areas did not entertain the fear, which their corresponding members in the central zone did, that the Maharaja might visit them any time to see things for himself.

20 Ganesh Das, *Char Bagh*, 321.

21 Dr Indu Banga's "Presidential Address" delivered at the Punjab History Conference held at Patiala in 1980.

Probably the *nazims* here also had a say, unlike the central zone, in the appointment of *kardars* in their areas. Thus, the *nazims* of these two *subas* were of necessity entrusted with larger powers. But this does not mean that they were allowed to do whatever they liked. The Maharaja tried to maintain a firm hold on them through various means. He stationed a host of efficient intelligence people in them and through their instrumentality got secret reports regularly about the state of affairs there. He also insisted on the high officials of the *subas* to send regular reports about their administration to the centre. Again he would go on sending to these places chiefs and other high dignitaries on one pretext or another and through them get first-hand information about the *suba* authorities and their activities. Several instances are available in which the decisions of the *subas* were reversed. Further, it was always open to the aggrieved persons of the *subas*, rather all parts of the state, to make complaints directly to the Maharaja though it does not appear that the number of people taking advantage of this facility was at any time very large.

The control of the centre on the peripheral area of Hazara, the *suba* of Peshawar and other administrative units of the north-west frontier regions was even less than what it was in the intermediate zone. For one thing the trans-Indus districts of Peshawar, Kohat, Bannu, Dera Ismail Khan and Dera Ghazi Khan were taken under direct management and control only in the last seven or eight years of the reign. Hazara was brought under direct administration much earlier but most of the time there was one rebellion or another going on in this difficult mountainous tract. The *suba* of Peshawar as well as the districts of the region were the toughest areas to be administered. They were constantly exposed to danger from the Amir of Kabul and the several unruly Pathan tribes inhabiting the mountainous valleys of the Sulaimans. More often than not troops had to be commissioned to coerce people into paying their taxes to the state. The state of affairs such as this and the region's long remove from the capital naturally demanded that the chief administrators on the spot should

be entrusted with a much greater degree of independence of action than elsewhere so that they might be in a position to deal effectively with the local problems. That is why Hari Singh Nalwa, and after his death in 1837, Avitabile were given considerably free hand in the discharge of their administrative responsibilities. But again this does not mean that they were entirely left to themselves to use their discretion in any way they liked. Because this borderland was a very sensitive area and vitally involved the question of security of the state as a whole, Ranjit Singh could not afford to ignore it. In fact, as was absolutely necessary for him, he kept a constant and vigilant eye on the happenings of the region. Quite a large proportion of his armed forces were stationed at strategic points in the entire area, mostly in and around the city of Peshawar which was the most vulnerable spot in that whole territory. This means that besides the governor of the Peshawar *suba* there were several other high dignitaries of the state either encamped there or on their way to Peshawar or returning from there to Lahore. Through them and also by means of his intelligence people the Maharaja always managed to keep himself well posted with up-to-date information about the border areas. And there are cases on record when the Maharaja did not approve of the decisions of the *nazim* of Peshawar and reversed them. For instance, when Avitabile penalised some residents of Peshawar by imposing a fine on them and demolishing their houses, General Ventura was ordered to reach Peshawar with all possible haste to make Avitabile return the two hundred rupees he had unjustly taken from the Khatris of the place and rebuild, at his expense, not exceeding 15,000 rupees, the houses of the people demolished by him.[22]

The prevalent concept of the functions of the state also restricted the scope of power wielded by Ranjit Singh. The primary functions that a state was supposed to perform at that time were : (i) conquering new territories ; (ii) defence of

22 *Punjab Akhbar*, 10 March 1839.

the state ; (iii) maintenance of internal law and order ; (iv) dispensation of justice and punishment of crime; (v) assessment and collection of taxes including land revenue.[23] Promotion of public welfare which might include encouragement of trade, industry and agriculture was not an essential function but was a desirable one which it was upto the state to undertake or not. There is no doubt that the state under Ranjit Singh not only performed all the essential functions but also took active interest in the welfare of the people. Even so, it is not difficult to see that vast areas of the life of the society were not covered by these activities of the state. To look after these other areas there were separate agencies which were thus minor centres of power working within the framework of their limited jurisdictions. Some of these agencies were village *panchayats*, caste *panchayats*, tribal organizations and unions (sort of guilds) of artisans, merchants and manufacturers. Each one of these bodies had time sanctioned functions and was legally competent to discharge its responsibilities without any external interferance and in accordance with the approved customs and practices of the organization concerned. The state did not try to interfere with the working of these social institutions but accepted them as an unavoidable social reality. Even if it so desired, it could not do so as they were long-established and were popular with the people. The main concern of the state with regard to them was to create conducive conditions for their peaceful and successful working. The law which was the basis of their decisions was also the long-established customary law of the land. Therefore here too there was little that the state could do. Rather, the state always showed great respect for the established law and constantly exhorted its local authorities to associate with themselves in their important undertakings the *chaudhris* and *panches* of the locality who as accredited leaders of their brotherhoods were supposed to know best

23 The functions under (ii), (iii) and (iv) are indeed three different aspects of the same function : maintenance of security, internal and external.

the customs and usages applicable to them.[24] In the lower administrative and fiscal units such as *tappas, topes, chaklas* and *mauzas* where agricultural tribal fraternities predominated, much of the power in matters of disputes among their members was exercised by their respective tribal organizations. Where courts were set up by the state, they were also required to apply the old laws — Hindu law in the civil cases of Hindus, Muslim law in the civil cases of Muslims and in the criminal cases of all people.

To the west of the central zone of the kingdom, particularly across the river Indus, where different clans and tribes (mostly Pathan) had developed over the centuries very potent and compact brotherhoods, power was exercised by the local bodies far more effectively. Helpful to them was also the fact that the power of the Lahore state was not so firmly established there as it was in other parts of the state. The Maharaja had to allow a much greater amount of local independence in this area. 'Although acknowledging the Khalsa supremacy and paying all demands made by the Sikh governor', writes Edwardes, 'each Khan was still a despot so far as the management of his Khanship was concerned, and imposed taxes, levied fines, in many instances punished capitally without further reference'.[25] The same point has been made in the *Attock District Gazetteer* of 1907 : 'The authority of the Lahore Government was always admitted and often asserted but subject to that admission the people were left to wrangle among themselves and to settle their own disputes with sword and dagger. Tribal authority was relied on to keep society together and prevent anarchy, and revenue was the only care'.[26]

So far we have been dealing with the directly administered areas of the state only. But there were also territories which

[24] Fauja Singh (ed), *Punjab da Smajik Itihas*, Punjabi University, Patiala 1979, 127.

[25] *Parliamentary Papers*, H. B. Edwardes to the Resident at Lahore, 4 May 1847.

[26] Ibid, part A, 39.

were only indirectly governed by the Sikh ruler. They were under vassal chiefs who were autonomous in their internal administration. The Maharaja's authority in respect of them was limited to his rights of suzerainty. Under these rights the vassals accepted the Maharaja as their overlord and agreed to abide by certain conditions in return for the overlord protecting them against foreign attacks and allowing them the liberty to conduct the internal affairs of their respective states as they liked.[27] These conditions were : (i) payment of annual *nazrana* (tribute); (ii) providing contingents when called upon to do so; (iii) acceptance of suzerains's control over foreign relations including relations with other vassal chiefs; (iv) recognition of suzerain's control over matters of succession to the *gaddi*.[28] In case there was violation of any of these conditions, the erring vassal could be brought to the path of submission and loyalty with force. Sometimes in order to enforce obedience hostages were taken from the vassals whose loyalty was not fully trusted. In more serious cases vassalage could be ended and direct administration established over the territory concerned. In fact, such an eventuality was not an exception but a practice generally followed by Ranjit Singh. Large parts of the state were to begin with only vassal chiefdoms and it was only later that they were annexed and brought under the direct control and management of the state. For instance, the territories of the erstwhile *misl* chiefs, Muhammadan principalities of Jhang,

27 Internal autonomy implied independent authority of the vassal chief in fiscal, administrative, judicial, and such other matters which were concerned purely with the internal administration of his state. He could make appointments, order transfers of his officials, collect taxes, incur expenditure, exercise magisterial and judicial powers and grant *jagirs* temporarily or permanently.

28 Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, Manohar Publications, New Delhi 1978, 46-52. It may be mentioned, however, that most of these vassals were *maurusi* (hereditary) *jagirdars* rather than subordinate rulers. In their *jagirs* they enjoyed administrative, judicial, magisterial and fiscal powers but the state had the right of interference in their internal affairs.

Multan, Sahiwal, Khushab, Pind Dadan Khan, Dera Ghazi Khan, Dera Ismail Khan, Bannu, Tank, Peshawar, Rajauri, Punchh, and the Rajput states of Jammu, Kangra, Chamba, Basohli, Nurpur—all at one time fell under this category. Gradually the picture was changed and towards the end of Ranjit Singh's reign the number of vassal states was greatly reduced and further they were practically confined to the fringes of the kingdom. The names of some of these states may be mentioned as Kutlehr, Guler, Siba, Nadaun, Mahal Morian, Chamba, Kulu, Mandi and Suket (eastern group), Bhadarwah and Basohli (central group), Muzaffarabad (Kashmir), Rajauri on the way to Kashmir, and Bahawalpur (only that part of its territories which lay on the right bank of the Satlej).[29] The Dogra chiefs of Jammu, Rajas Gulab Singh, Dhian Singh and Suchet Singh, were merely *jagirdars* in the beginning, but in course of time, they acquired the status of vassals with effective powers in the internal administration of their *jagirs*. In 1827 Raja Dhian Singh was assigned the administration of the country of Bhimbar and Chhibal along with the title of *raja-i-rajgan, raja-i-kalan bahadur*. His son, Raja Hira Singh, was given the principalities of Jasrota and Basohli.[30] At the time of Ranjit Singh's death the Jamwal brothers controlled nearly all the former principalities between the Ravi and the Jehlam. The Ahluwalia state of Kapurthala, which was an independent state in the beginning, with the passage of time also came to be reduced to the status of a vassal state. When its ruler Fateh Singh Ahluwalia died in

[29] Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, 45-46. Actually most of them at the same time were *jagirdars* as well. For example, the chiefs of Guler, Lambagraon, Nadaun, Mahal Morian, Kutlehr and Siba (all in the Kangra region), and of Kulu and Nurpur were all granted *jagirs* by Ranjit Singh. The value of the *jagirs* held by some of them was as follows: Guler-Rs. 20, 743; Lambagraon-Rs. 34, 897; Nadaun-Rs. 36, 722; Kutlehr - 10,000, and half of the revenue of Chokee and Kutlehr; Siba-Rs. 20,000; Kulu-Rs. 7,000; Mahal Morian-Rs. 50, 000 : *Foreign/Political Progs.* 21 December 1847, Nos. 2470-75.

[30] Grewal and Banga, "Ranjit Singh : the Suzerain", *Proceedings Punjab History Conference, 1970*, 80-81.

1836, his successor had to pay a *nazrana* of 42,500 rupees to Ranjit Singh before succeeding to the *gaddi* of the state.[31] The Maharaja also had some Sikh vassals in the Satlej-Jamuna Divide.

In the end we may say on the basis of our analysis in the foregoing pages that although Ranjit Singh was a very powerful monarch who not only possessed vast powers but also exercised them almost unaided, his position was not that of an absolute ruler. There were some serious limitations on his power as we have seen. The degree of authority wielded by him could not be the same in all parts of the state because the conditions everywhere were not uniform. Distance from the headquarters and the character of the people to be governed were among the important determining factors of policy in the matter of actual exercise of power. There were also extensive areas of society's life which at that time were considered outside the normal and essential functions of the state. Religious beliefs and practices of different denominations, long-established laws of Hindus and Muslims, customs and usages observed by village *panchayats*, caste *panchayats*, professional guilds and tribal councils all belonged to this category. Besides all the direct limitations such as these, there were also some indirect and potential checks on the powers of the Maharaja. They were, according to N. K. Sinha : (i) the living principle of the Sikh commonwealth (Khalsaji); (ii) the order of the Akalis; (iii) martial nobility of the Punjab; and (iv) the common people possessed of arms.[32] These indirect checks were not so effective as the direct checks. Still they had a certain measure of restraining influence. A point, however, which needs to be stressed most is that instead of smarting under these natural limitations and checks, Ranjit Singh accepted them gladly and honoured them; rather he strained every nerve to turn them to his as well as the state's best advantage.

31 Diwan Amar Nath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, 120; Sohan Lal, *Umdat ut-Twarikh*, Daftar III (tr V.S. Suri), S. Chand & Co., Delhi 1961, 311-14.

32 N. K. Sinha, *Ranjit Singh*, 136.

State Patronage to the Udasis Under Maharaja Ranjit Singh

Sulakhan Singh*

Alienation of land revenue to religious personages and institutions by way of charity (*dharmarth*) was an important aspect of Sikh rule.[1] The Sikh rulers alienated revenues from land in favour of individuals and institutions belonging to various Sikh and non-Sikh religious groups, including the Udasis.[2] Among the Sikh religious orders, the Udasis enjoyed the maximum revenue-free grants, next only to the Sodhis and the Bedis who strictly speaking did not form a religious group.[3] It was in the early nineteenth century, however, that the Udasis and the majority of their establishments came into prominence largely because of the extensive patronage of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

We propose to analyse state patronage to the Udasis primarily in terms of numbers, distribution and relative significance of the patronized Udasi establishments, their revenue-

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1 The institution of *dharmarth* or revenue-free grants, however, was not an innovation of Sikh rule. The medieval rulers did extend their patronage to individuals and institutions as an act of charity : see for example, B. N. Goswamy and J. S. Grewal (tr & ed), *The Mughals and The Jogis of Jakhbar*, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Simla 1967, 19 & 24.

2 For state patronage of Sikh and non-Sikh religious personages and institutions under Sikh rule, see Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, Manohar Publications, New Delhi 1978, 148-67 & nn.

3 Some of the Sodhis and Bedis received *jagirs* in fact for military service to the state : ibid, 155, 156n41 & 166.

free grants, purposes and motives of their patrons and finally, the position of the Udasis towards the end of Sikh rule. This analysis is largely based on documentary evidence collected by the early British administrators in connection with revenue settlements, now lying in the National Archives of India at New Delhi. It may be added that information on the revenue-free grants of Udasi establishments available in other contemporary and near contemporary sources is rather scanty.[4]

Towards the end of Sikh rule, Udasi establishments were variously known as *akharas, deras, darbars, smadhs* and *gurdwaras* or *dharmsalas*.[5] These establishments were found widely scattered over all the *doabs* of the Punjab. However, they were located in large numbers in the districts of Amritsar, Gurdaspur, Lahore, Multan, Montgomery, Jhang, Shaikhupura, Gujranwala, Jullundur and Hoshiarpur, particularly in the districts of the upper and middle portions of the Bari, Rachna and Bist-Jullundur Doabs. Across the river Satlej, most of the Udasi centres were in the districts of Ferozepur and Ludhiana. They were found both in towns and cities and in the villages in the countryside.

Some of the Udasi establishments had come into existence before the beginning of Sikh rule. However, the number of such Udasi centres was rather small, about only a dozen. Many

4 Only the works of Giani Gian Singh and Lepel H. Griffin give some information on the revenue-free grants of about a dozen Udasi *akharas* located in the city of Amritsar. They also notice the orthodox Sikh centres associated with Guru Nanak and his eldest son, Sri Chand, which were managed by Udasi Mahants in the districts of Gurdaspur, Shaikhupura, Gujranwala, Sialkot and Gujrat : respectively, *Tawarikh Sri Amritsar*, Kendri Singh Sabha Committee, Amritsar 1977 ; *The Panjab Chiefs*, Lahore 1865.

5 All these establishments managed by the Udasi Mahants during Sikh times may be divided into three broad categories : centres established by Udasi *sadhs* ; centres at places associated with the Sikh Gurus ; and centres at places connected with personalities associated with Guru Nanak : Sulakhan Singh, "Udasi Establishments under Sikh Rule", *Journal of Regional History*, 1 (1980), 85-86.

more establishments came up as a result of the patronage of the early Sikh rulers and the number of such patronized institutions by the end of the eighteenth century rose to about 50. In the early nineteenth century, under Maharaja Ranjit Singh and his successors, over sixty new Udasi centres came to be patronized.[6]

Relatively speaking, over fifty establishments were rather large and important in terms of their resources and influence during the Sikh times. About thirty of these enjoyed revenue-free grants ranging from 1,000 to 9,000 rupees a year; nearly twenty, from 200 to 800 rupees a year; and over a hundered, from 10 to 200 rupees. Among the topmost Udasi institutions were the *akhara* of Baba Satnokh Das (Brahmbuta) in the city of Amritsar and the Udasi *dera* in Dera Baba Nanak, respectively receiving over 18,000 and 12,000 rupees a year.[7] By contrast, the *dharmsala* of Mahant Bhaggir at Karirwala in Gujrat enjoyed the grant of four annas daily for its expenses.[8] Individual grantees received grants even of a smaller value.[9]

About half a dozen of the old Udasi centres had received revenue-free grants from the Mughal rulers and the Afghan chiefs of Qasur before the establishment of Sikh rule.[10] Narain Das and Jagannath, the Udasi *sadhs* of the *dera-i-khurd* of Bhai Pheru in *tahsil* Qasur of the Lahore district, had enjoyed lands worth over 400 rupees a year for the maintenance of

6 Sulakhan Singh "Udasi Establishments under Sikh Rule", 74.

7 *Foreign/Political Progs.* 7 Jan 1853, No. 219, case 1; ibid, 14 Jan 1853, No. 241, case 28.

8 Ibid, 18 June 1852, No. 182, case 35.

9 Ibid, 20 Aug 1852, Nos. 140-41; ibid, 13 Feb 1857, Nos 294-95; ibid, 9 Jan 1857, Nos. 237-42, 245, 250, 253 & 256.

10 Ibid, 14 Jan 1853, No. 229, case 2; ibid, 14 Jan 1853, No. 240, case 26; ibid, 27 May 1853, No. 202, case 32, ibid, 23 June 1854, Nos. 204-05, cases 7 & 13; ibid, 27 March 1857, Nos 245-47, case 19; ibid, 8 April 1859, Nos 64-66.

their establishment.[11] A *chaknama* of Nawab Sadiq Beg Khan shows the grant of 10 *ghumaons* of land received by Bhai Bhumia Ji, founder of the *dharmsala* at Jandiala in Jullundur district.[12] Hira Das, Bhai Sukha Ram and Bhai Phuman Shah of Bhai Pheru too had received grants from the pre-Sikh rulers for the maintenance of their institutions in the later districts of Lahore, Montgomery, Jhang and Sialkot.[13] It may by pointed out that documents mentioning the grants of Mughal rulers to Udasi institutions rarely specify the date and value of the grants.

The Udasis received *dharmarth* grants from non-Sikh rulers during the period of Sikh rule. Over half a dozen Udasi Mahants received grants from Rai Kalha, Rai Ilias and Rai Ahmad of Raikot, Allah Yar Khan of Sahiwal and Raja Ranjit Dev of Jammu.[14] Bhai Shiv Karan had received a grant from Rai Kalha in 1752 for the upkeep of his *dharmsala* at Chuharchak in Ferozepur.[15] Mahant Gurdial received a grant from Raja Ranjit Dev of Jammu in 1764 for *sadabarat* or *langar* at the shrine of Sahib Ram Kaur at Kot Naina in Gurdaspur.[16] Baba Santokh Das, alias Tappa, received a grant worth over 250 rupees a year from Raja Gulab Singh in 1844 for the maintenance of his *akhara* at Gujrat.[17] Also, the *akhara* of Baba Santokh Das, now known as Brahmbuta *akhara*, enjoyed grant

11 *Foreign/Political Progs.* 14 Jan 1853, No.229, case 2. Narain Das Mahant of the *dera-i-khurd* at Qasur was a disciple of Bhai Pheru, also known as Sangat Sahib who was a contemporary of Guru Gobind Singh. His followers were known as Sangat Sahibias a very famous *bakhshish* of the Udasis.

12 Ibid, 27 March 1857, Nos. 245-47 case 19.

13 Ibid, 14 Jan 1853, No. 240, case 26; ibid, 27 May 1853, No. 202, case 32; ibid, 23 June 1854, Nos. 204-5, cases 7 & 13.

14 Ibid, 16 April 1852, No. 49, cases 3 & 9; ibid, 27 May 1853, No. 202, case 37; ibid, 9 Jan 1857, No. 239, cases 5, 7 9 & 12.

15 Ibid, 9 Jan 1857, No. 239, case 7.

16 Ibid, 7 Jan 1853, No. 219, case 17.

17 Ibid, 16 April 1852, No 49, case 9.

of three villages worth 1,600 rupees a year in the territory of Munawar, received from Raja Gulab Singh.[18] Similarly, Baba Ghamandi Ram, Baba Rao Dev, Sukhram Das and Saran Das, Baba Puran Das and Charan Das enjoyed the patronage of some of the non-Sikh chiefs mentioned above for the upkeep of their institutions in the districts of Ferozepur, Ludhiana and Shahpur.[19]

Altogether, over a dozen Mahants are known to have received revenue-free grants from non-Sikh rulers, before and during the Sikh times. They represented about one-third of the Udasi institutions, located in districts which formed the core area of Udasi establihsments. Most of them continued to hold grants into the British times.[20] Besides the confirmation of old grants, their establishments received fresh grants from Maharaja Ranjit Singh, his predecessors and successors. In this way, they flourished more under the Sikh rulers than under the Mughals.

The Sikh rulers had started alienating revenues from land in favour of Udasi establishments from the beginning of their rule. They gave fresh grants to many new Udasi centres which came into prominence during the period of Sikh rule. The earliest of these grants on record is the one given by Sardar Amar Singh Bagga to Mahant Gian Das in 1746 for the maintenance of his *dharmsala* at Dharmkot in Gurdaspur.[21] The Bagga chiefs gave grants to several other *dharmsalas* in the late eighteenth century.[22] The number of Sukarchakia, Bhangi, Kanhiya, Nakkai, Ramgarhia, Singhpuria and other Sikh chiefs who gave grants to the Udasis during this period

[18] *Foreign/Political Progs.* 7 Jan 1853, No. 219, case 1.

[19] Ibid. 16 April 1852, No. 49, case 3; ibid, 27 May 1853, No. 202, case 37; ibid, 9 Jan 1857, No. 239, cases 5, 9 & 12.

[20] Ibid, 16 April 1852, No. 49, cases 3 & 9; ibid, 27 May 1853, No. 202, case 37; ibid, 9 Jan 1857, No. 239, cases 5, 7, 9 & 12.

[21] Ibid, 8 Aug 1856, No. 206, case 228.

[22] Ibid, 8 Aug 1856, No. 206, cases 228 & 240.

comes to about thirty.[23] Charhat Singh and Mahan Singh, the ancestors of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, gave grants to the *darbar* at Rori Sahib in Sialkot and to Asthan Keir Baba Nanak in Gujrat.[24] Both these places were associated with Guru Nanak. The *akharas* of Baba Santokh Das, Pritam Das and Ghamand Das in the city of Amritsar received *dharmarth* grants from all the prominent Bhangi, Kanhiya, Nakkai, Ramgarhia and Singhpuria chiefs in the late eighteenth century.[25] By the close of the century, about fifty Udasi centres were enjoying fresh revenue-free grants worth about 1,20,000 rupees a year. They were widely scattered all over the Punjab, with greater concentration in the districts of Amritsar, Gujranwala, Gurdaspur, Shaikhupura, Jullundur, Ferozepur, Ludhiana, Lahore, Gujrat, Jhang and Sialkot. The Sikh chiefs or their descendants continued to give fresh grants to Udasi establishments during the rule of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in the early nineteenth century.[26]

Grants given to the Udasis by the earlier rulers were generally confirmed by Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The old grants were given formal recognition whenever the need arose. For instance, the grants of Mahant Charan Das were confirmed

[23] *Foreign/Political Progs*, 7 Jan 1853, No. 219; ibid, 14 Jan 1853, No. ibid, 27 May 1853, No. 240; ibid, 4 July 1856, Nos. 152-53; ibid, 9 Jan 1857, No. 260. Important among the grantors were Lehna Singh, Karam Singh, Gujjar Singh, Tara Singh Sajjan Singh, Bhag Singh Hallowalia and Nar Singh Chamiari; Jai Singh, Gurbakhsh Singh, Hakikat Singh, Jaimal Singh and Tej Singh, Ram Singh, Wazir Singh and Gian Singh; Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, Amar Singh and Majja Singh, Kaur Singh, Sadda Singh, Sham Singh Nihang, Sahib Singh Jhollia and Bhag Singh Muraliwala.

[24] Ibid, 14 Jan 1853 No. 240, cases 26 & 27.

[25] Ibid, 7 Jan 1853, No. 219; ibid, 14 Jan 1853, No. 240; ibid, 27 May 1856, Nos 152-53; ibid, 9 Jan 1857, No. 260.

[26] Ibid, 7 Jan 1853, No. 219, cases, 1,2,3, & 7; ibid, 14 Jan 1853, No. 240, cases 21, 22 & 28; ibid, 27 May 1853, No. 202, case 32; ibid, 4 July 1856, Nos. 152-53, cases 6 & 56. Among these grantors were Sahib Singh, Gulab Singh, Jhanda Singh, Gurdit Singh, Mai Sukhan (widow of Gulab Singh), Amar Singh, Bhag Singh, Jaimal Singh, Fateh Singh, Ran Singh and Karam Singh Ramgarhia.

in 1834 by the Maharaja.[27] Towards the end of Ranjit Singh's rule about one-third of the old Udasi centres were enjoying grants, confirmed or given afresh by the Maharaja.[28] It is significant to mention that the old Udasi centres flourished more during his reign.

In the time of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Mahant Brahmrup was perhaps the first to receive a grant in 1796 for the maintenance of the *akhara* of Pritam Das in the city of Amritsar.[29] However, the maximum of *dharmarth* grants were given to the *akhara* of Baba Santokh Das.[30] Several of the establishments coming up during this period enjoyed grants worth over 500 rupees a year.[31] Udasi Mahants enjoying fresh grants from the Maharaja became very numerous towards the end of his rule.[32] Prominent among the original grantees were Apbrahm, Brahamhari, Baba Ghamand Das, Baba Tehal Das, Balanand, Baba Harsukh, Brahm Hulas and Sant Das.[33] Altogether, over a hundred Udasi institutions were enjoying grants worth about 80,000 rupees a year in the dominions of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. They remained concentrated in the old districts, though some of

27 *Foreign/Political Progs*. 7 Jan 1853, No. 219, case 17.

28 Ibid, 7 Jan 1853, No. 219, cases 2 & 17; ibid, 14 Jan 1853, No 240, case 25 ; ibid, 9 Jan 1857, No. 239, cases 5, 7, 9 & 12.

29 Ibid, 7 Jan 1853, No. 219, case 17. This institution is now known as the Sangalwala *akhara*; its grant amounted to 500 rupees a year.

30 Ibid, 7 Jan, 1853, No. 219, case 2.

31 Ibid, 7 Jan 1853, No. 219, cases 3, 4, 12 & 20 ; ibid, 14 Jan 1853, No. 241, cases 24, 25 & 28.

32 *Foreign/Political Progs* 16 April 1852, No. 49 ; ibid, 7 Jan 1853 No. 219 ; ibid, 14 Jan 1853, No. 240 ; ibid, 27 May 1853, No. 202 ; ibid, 4 July 1856, Nos. 152, 162 & 212.

33 Ibid, 16 April 1852, No. 49, case 8 ; ibid, 7 Jan 1853, No. 219; ibid, 14 Jan 1853, No. 240 ; ibid, 27 May 1853, No. 202; ibid, 4 July 1856, Nos. 152, 162 & 212. Among the grantees were also Karam Das, Saran Das, Jodha Ram, Sadhu Ram, Charan Das, Har Sewak Ram, Gulab Das and Bhai Jhanda, Sawan Singh and Mitha Singh, Balak Singh, Sukhram Das, Ramditta, Ram Parshad, Ram Das, Bhai Nakda Das, Ram Dhan, Jog Dhian, Prem Das, Buddh Das, Baba Sidki Das, Harsaran Das, Mohar Singh, Mela Singh, Saran Das and Gursaran Das.

them could be found even in the districts of Dera Ismail Khan, Khangarh, Multan and Shahpur.[34] This pattern of patronage continued under Maharaja Kharak Singh, Sher Singh and Dalip Singh, all of whom gave a few fresh grants and generally confirmed the old grants of the Udasis.[35] Scattered references to grants given by princes, princesses and relatives of the Maharaja are also found.[36]

The Udasis received a considerable number of fresh grants from the *jagirdars*, the local functionaries and the *zamindars* of the Sikh times. Like the Sikh rulers, they started giving grants from the beginning of Sikh rule. Nanak Das, a Mahant of the *dharmsala* of Cheecha in Amritsar, is stated to have received land worth 70 rupees a year from Sewa Singh the *jagirdar* of that village in 1756.[37] Many a Mahant enjoyed patronage of the *jagirdars* in the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth century.[38] Prominent among them were the Atariwalas, Majithias, Kalianwalas, Sandhanwalias and the Man *sardars*.[39] References to grants given by *ghorcharas* and *thanadars* to Udasi Mahants are also available.[40]

Among the state functionaries who gave grants to the Udasis were *nazims*, *kardars*, *chaudharis* and *lambardars*. The *dera* of Bhai Pirthi, at Manak in Lahore, for instance, received a

34 Sulakhan Singh, "Udasi Establishments Under Sikh Rule", 74 n 19.

35 *Foreign/Political Progs*, 7 Jan 1853, No. 219, cases 6, 12 & 13; ibid, 14 Jan 1853, Nos. 240-41, cases 21, 23 & 28.

36 Ibid, 7 Jan 1853, No. 219, cases 1, 5, 12, 13, 14 & 16; ibid, 14 Jan 1853 No. 240, case 25; ibid, 14 Jan No. 241, case 29. They include Kanwar Kashmira Singh, Kanwar Nao Nihal Singh, Mai Man (?), mother of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Mahtab Kaur and Mai Nakkain, Sada Kaur and Rani Chand Kaur.

37 Ibid, 4 July 1856, No. 162, case 15.

38 Ibid, 7 Jan 1853, No. 219, cases 7 & 8; ibid, 14 Jan 1853, No. 240, cases 22 & 25; ibid, 12 Sep 1856, No. 179, case 17.

39 Ibid. 7 Jan 1853, No. 219; Ibid, 14 Jan 1853, No. 240; ibid, 27 May 1863, No. 202; ibid, 8 Aug 1856, No. 206.

40 Ibid, 7 Jan 1883, No. 219, case 17; ibid, 27 May 1853, No. 202, cases 30 & 34.

grant from Diwan Lakhpat Rai in 1753.[41] The governors to extend patronage to Udasi establishments during the Sikh times were Misar Diwan Chand, Diwan Sawan Mal, Hari Singh Nalwa and General Avitabile.[42] The *dera-i-kalan* of Bhai Pheru of Lahore, and the Udasi establishment attached with the *dehura* or the shrine of Guru Nanak at Dera Baba Nank in Gurdaspur, received grants from *kardars*, *chaudharis* and *lambardars*.[43] In spite of their smaller number and value,[44] the grants given by the state functionaries and *jagirdars* are suggestive more of Udasi popularity than the extensive state patronage.

Udasi establishments received patronage in the form of 'religious offerings', *bhent* or *ardas*, from the ordinary land-owners. The *dharmsala* of Baba Guria at Bhagowal in Gurdaspur received seven *ghumaons* of land from the *zamindars* of that village in the 1750s.[45] Dera Tahli Sahib or the Darbar of Baba Sri Chand, the shrine of Sahib Ram Kaur at Kot Naina in Gurdaspur, the *akhara* of Baba Santokh Das at Amritsar and the *smadh* of Baba Buddha at Ramdas in the district of Amritsar were enjoying donations from the *zamindars*.[46] The Udasis generally received pecuniary and other aid from the inhabitants of the villages in which their establishments were located.[47] They appear, thus, to have

[41] *Foreign/Political Progs*, 27 May 1853, No. 202, case 33.

[42] Ibid, 18 June 1852, Nos. 182, & 35 ; ibid, 14 Jan 1853, No. 240, cases 21 & 25 ; ibid, 27 May 1853, No. 202, cases 33 & 36.

[43] Ibid, 7 Jan 1853, No. 241, case 28 ; ibid 27 May 1853 No. 202 case 32.

[44] Ibid, 14 Jan 1853, No. 240, cases 26 & 27 ; ibid, 27 May 1853, No. 202, case 32 ; ibid, 28 Nov 1856, No. 113, cases 87 & 100.

[45] Ibid 7 Jan 1853, No 219, case 3.

[46] Ibid, 7 Jan 1853, No. 219, cases 1 & 17 ; ibid 14 Jan 1853, No. 241, case 29; ibid, 4 July 1856, No. 152, case 46.

[47] For instance, Mahant Saran Das constructed a *dharmsala* at Jamiatpur in Ludhiana district with the help of the inhabitants of that village : ibid, 9 Jan 1857 No 250 case 5.

enjoyed considerable influencc among the land-owning classes. The Kambohs in Montgomery district, for instance, looked upon an Udasi named Phuman Shah as their patron saint.[48] The Udasis were popular among the peasantry particularly the Randhawa Jats in the upper Bari Doab.[49]

Besides *dharmarth* grants for the institutions, Udasi individuals enjoyed daily, monthly or annual 'cash pensions' or 'charitable allowances'. Among the recipients of such grants were Mahants Sunder Das, Mohi Das, Charan Das, Vir Bhan, Chander Das, Baba Sital Das, Mehar Das and Baba Narain Das. They received grants from Maharaja Ranjit Singh and his successors, Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh, Mai Nakkain (wife of Maharaja Ranjit Singh), Diwan Sawan Mal, General Ventura and Diwan Mul Raj. Most of them acted as readers of the Granth and attendants of *dharmsalas*.[50] Udasi Mahants received cash grants also sometimes for the maintenance of the *dharmsalas*[51] Mahant Ram Das, for instance, received over seventy rupees from the 'Vattala treasury' for the maintenance of the institution of Sant Das at Batala.[52] The number of individual grantees was rather small but they were found in widely scattered areas like Dera Ismail Khan, Khangarh, Jhang, Pakpatan, Gujranwala and Jullundur.[53]

Towards the end of Sikh rule, Udasi Mahants were managing more than two hundred institutions, out of which about

48 *Report of the Revised Land Revenue Settlement of Montgomery District of Multan Division of the Punjab*, Lahore, 1878, 51; *Montgomery District Gazetteer, 1883-84*, 69.

49 H. A. Rose, *A Glossary of the Tribes and Castes of The Punjab and North-West Frontier Province*, Punjab Languages Department, Patiala 1970 (reprint — first published 1916), 111 & 320.

50 *Foreign/Political Progs*, 16 April 1852, No. 99, case 11; ibid, 30 April 1882, No. 100, cases 20, 24, 25, 29 & 34; ibid, 18 June 1852, No. 184, case 134.

51 Ibid, 30 April 1852, No. 100, case 32; ibid, 18 June 1852, No. 182, case 27 & 35; ibid, 6 Aug 1852, No. 130A, case 8; ibid, 7 Jan 1853, No 219, case 12; ibid, 12 Jan 1883, No. 238, case B-17.

52 Ibid, 7 Jan 1853 No. 219, case 12.

53 See n 61, above.

a hundred and fifty were enjoying patronage of the kingdom of Lahore. The grants of the patronized institutions amounted to about 2 lakhs of rupees a year, forming nearly 10 per cent of the total estimated *dharmarth* grants. Next to the Sodhis and the Bedis, who received 4 and 5 lakhs of rupees a year respectively, the Udasis appropriated the maximum share of the state's revenue as a religious group.[54]

With the increase and expansion of Udasi institutions in the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Udasi influence was also spreading to new areas. Under Ranjit Singh and his successors the old Udasi centres flourished more in terms of influence and resources than under his Mughal and Sikh predecessors. The patronage given by the Sikh rulers in turn increased their social influence. Towards the end of Sikh rule the Udasis wielded a considerable influence among the ruling and land-owning classes, particularly the ordinary peasant proprietors of the Sikh times and the common people living in cities and towns.[55] The Sangat Sahibias, or the followers of Sangat Sahib also known as Bhai Pheru, and the Mihan Sahibias, or the followers of Mihan Sahib, were more influential than any other group of Udasis in the Punjab.[56]

The purpose for which Udasi institutions and individuals received grants from the rulers is clearly indicated by certain

[54] According to a contemporary estimate the total revenues alienated by way of *dharmarth* grants amounted to 20,00000 rupees a year, of which the Sodhis and the Bedis enjoyed 4 and 5 lakhs of rupees respectively : J.D. Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, S. Chand and Co, Delhi 1966 (reprint), Appendix XXXVIII. The *dharmarth* grants of the Udasis worked out from documentary evidence collected by the early British administrators in connection with revenue settlements between 1850 and 1859, amounts to about 2 lakhs of rupees a year, which formed nearly 10 per cent of the total *dharmarth* grants.

[55] Sulakhan Singh, "Udasi Establishments Under Sikh Rule", *Journal of Regional History*, I (1980), 84.

[56] *Foreign/Political Progs.* 27 May 1857, No. 202, cases 32 & 36; ibid, 7 Jan 1853, No. 219, cases 1 & 2; ibid, 14 Jan 1853, No. 229, case 2.

terms and phrases used in the documents. They received grants primarily for the maintenance of the institutions and for providing food, clothes or shelter to the resident *sadhs*; the attendants like cooks, servants, musicians; travellers or pilgrims, and the needy people. The *akhara* of Baba Santokh Das at Amritsar and the *dera-i-kalan* of Bhai Pheru in *tahsil* Qasur of the Lahore district, for instance, accommodated *sadhs* and attendants numbering over 300 and 200 respectively.[57] The number of persons accommodated in other institutions ranged from ten to sixty-five. Individual grantees received grants mainly for their own subsistence and for performing some duties to the public, like the reading of the Granth or attending to travellers in the *dharmsalas* — like Mahant Mohi Das of the *dharmsala* at Ghallowan and Bhan Singh Udasi of the *dharmsala* at Ahmadpur in Khangarh district.[58] Individuals received grants for subsistence on account of various other reasons.[59] The grantees were often expected to pray for the welfare of the grantor.[60] Sometimes the Mahants received grants specifically for holding *sadabarts* or *langars*.[61] Occasionally, they received grants for imparting religious education or instruction in Gurmukhi and Sanskrit in *akharas* and *dharmsalas*.[62] The *kardars* of the Lahore Darbar also gave some petty revenue-free grants to the Udasi Mahants who sunk wells for public use.[63]

The Sikh rulers expected all the grantees not only to pray for the welfare of the rulers or their territories, but also to enlist

57 *Foreign/Political Progs.* 7 Jan 1853, No. 219, case 1; ibid, 27 May 1853, NO. 202, case 32.

58 Ibid, 30 April 1852, No. 100, cases 24 & 25.

59 Mehar Das Udasi received a grant of 30 rupees from Mai Nakkain in 1819 in Shaikhupura district 'for procuring Bhang and pepper' : ibid, 18 June 1852, No. 184, case 134.

60 Ibid, 4 July 1856, No. 152, case 56.

61 Ibid, 27 May 1853, No. 232, case 32, 33 & 37; ibid; 23 June 1854, Nos. 204-05, cases 1 & 7; *Ludhiana District Gazetteer, 1888-89*, 73.

62 *Foreign/Political Progs*, 30 April 1852, No. 100, case 14; ibid, 14 Dec 1856, Nos. 315-16.

63 *Ferozepur District Gazetteer, 1888-89*, 127.

support for social and political purposes. Maharaja Ranjit Singh's patronage to the Udasis becomes very significant in this connection. No doubt the Maharaja was liberal and catholic in matters of revenue-free grants, but we cannot ignore his interest in consolidating his power among different social elements. The Udasis could be patronized therefore, partly for their influence among the various sections of the society, and partly to make themselves influential with the people. They could serve as a counterpoise to orthodox religious groups among the Sikhs.

The Udasi establishments suffered a serious setback in terms of patronage after the fall of Sikh rule in 1849. In case of the *akhara* of Baba Santokh Das, for instance, lands worth over 8,000 were resumed by the British by 1852. By the close of the century, this establishment enjoyed grants worth only 7,000 rupees a year, in place of 18,000 rupees. In fact, the majority of the Udasi establishments lost nearly 25 per cent of their grants in the 1850s and their position in the early twentieth century was much weaker than in the first half of the nineteenth century. However, they retained a considerable number of grants in perpetuity.[64]

The position and character of the Udasi Mahants and their establishments in terms of their rights, duties and functions in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was somewhat different from that under Sikh rule. The Mahant or the head-priest of each Udasi establishment during the Sikh times acted, not as its virtual owner, but as a custodian or manager of its religious, financial and organizational affairs. He could not claim the establishment and its resources as his private property. It was under the British that certain proprietary rights were conferred upon the Mahants as a result of the new rulers' policy of changing them into landed 'proprietors' and

64 Sulakhan Singh "Udasi Establishments Under Sikh Rule", 86.

discouraging the institution of *dharmarth* grants.[65] At the time of the land revenue settlements the Mahants returned themselves as owners of the land.[66] They turned the institutions into private lodges and started using their resources for personal purposes. It was partly the mismanagement of these institutions by the Mahants and other vested interests that roused the religious sentiments of the Akalis in the 1920s.[67]

65 "General Report on the Administration of the Punjab Territories for the years 1851-52 and 1852-53", *Selections From the Records of the Government* (Foreign Department), No. VI, Calcutta 1854, 213; *Final Report on the Revision of Settlement of the Ludhiana District 1878-83*, Calcutta 1884, 60.

66 *Final Report on the Revision of Settlement of the Ludhiana District, 1878-83*, 60; *Ludhiana District Gazetter 1888-89*, 72.

67 Mohinder Singh, *The Akali Movement*, Macmillan Company of India, Delhi 1978, 15-61.

The Harmandir and Maharaja Ranjit Singh

Madanjit Kaur*

Ranjit Singh's association with the Harmandir did not start with his occupation of Amritsar. It is not unlikely that he visited Amritsar as a boy in the lifetime of his father, Mahan Singh. It is quite certain that he came to Amritsar in 1796, during Shan Zaman's invasion of the Punjab. On this occasion, and also later in 1797, he played a decisive role in the deliberations of the Sikh rulers in the face of a common threat to their position.[1] These deliberations must have taken place at the Akal Takht, and Ranjit Singh must have visited the Harmandir several times during his stay in Amritsar. When he occupied the city in 1805, he went to the Harmandir to pay a thankful homage, making large cash offerings at the Akal Takhat as well as the Harmandir.[2]

Maharaja Ranjit Singh continued to pay homage with offerings on the occasions of important campaigns and conquests. After the conquest of Kashmir, for instance, he came to Amritsar and paid his obeissance at the Harmandir, making large offerings in cash and gold.[3] This was not the first or the

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1 Khushwant Singh, *Ranjit Singh : The Maharajah of the Punjab*, George Allen & Unwin, London 1962, 33-36.

2 Sita Ram Kohli, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh* (Punjabi), Atma Ram and Sons, Delhi 1953, 60.

3 Ibid, 157; Pandit Debi Prasad, *Gulshan-i-Punjab* (Pbi tr Harminder Singh Kohli), Punjabi University, Patiala 1979, 20.

last occasion of its kind.[4] However, the Maharaja visited the Harmandir much more frequeutly to pay his homage as an act of devotion and piety. The testimony of Sohan Lal Suri alone is enough on this particular point.[5] These visits were usually paid on the *amavas* and *sankranti* days of the month. On these occasions the Maharaja used to take bath in the holy tank, to go inside the Harmandir, to rub his forehead on the ground, and to listen to the hymns of the Granth Sahib. He used to leave only after making an *ardas* like any other Sikh visitor. The Maharaja also made offerings to other sacred places, like the Akal Takht, Jhanda Bunga and Dukh Bhanjani Ber. He used to perform *sankalap* according to the old Hindu custom, and distributed alms and charities generously on all such occasions. The Maharaja used to visit the Harmandir also on the festive occasions of the Diwali, Baisakhi and Dussehra with offerings, and for *ardas*. Special arrangements were ordered to be made on such occasions.[6] An order was issued to Prince Kharak Singh in 1831 to go to Amritsar on the Baisakhi day for sacred bath and 'to rub his forehead at the Harmandir in order to secure everlasting felicity'.[7] The Maharaja built his own *bunga* in the north-west of the Harmandir, close to the sacred tank, to be used if necessary on the occasion of his visits.[8]

As a token of his devotion and piety, Maharaja Ranjit Singh made many offerings in kind to the Harmandir. In the *tosha-khana* of the Harmandir there are many precious articles which were offered as *bhent* by the Maharaja : two golden gates with floral designs and representations of traditional episodes from

4 H. L. O. Garrett and G. L. Chopra (tr & ed), *Events at the Court of Ranjit Singh, 1810-1817*, Punjab Languages Department, Patiala 1970 (reprint), 87.

5 Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat ut-Tawarikh* (tr V. S. Suri), Punjab Itihas Prakashan, Chandigarh 1974, Daftar III, 23, 109-10, 137-38, 139, 146-47, 148, 171, 173, 204, 240, 543, 246, 251-52, 305, 309, 325, 376, 418, 437, 589-90, 625-26, 642 & 648.

6 Ibid, 19, 82, 182, 308 & 525-27.

7 Ibid, 29.

8 Ganda Singh (ed), *Tawarikh-i-Amritsar Ke Chand Makhiz*, Sikh History Society, Amritsar 1953, 48.

the lives of the Gurus, a canopy with about twenty pounds of gold, and studded with diamonds, emeralds, rubies and pearls, a bejewelled headband worth millions, another canopy worth millions, a sword with a golden handle studded with jewels and pearls, for example. In consonance with his own custom, the Maharaja willed before his death that his personal horses should be sent to the Harmandir.[9]

Maharaja Ranjit Singh performed many 'acts of service' for the Harmandir. Several alterations were made within the Harmandir and its precincts.[10] An inscription over the entrance on the southern side of the Harmandir tells us that, through Bhai Sant Singh Giani, Sri Maharaja Ranjit Singh got executed the auspicious service of Guru Ram Das Ji in gold and white marble. This was inscribed in 1820. Three walls of the Harmandir were inlaid with gold provided by the Maharaja.[11] Much of the white marble too was contributed by him. The best artists available were employed for *naqqashi*. For this 'service' in gold and marble, the Maharaja contributed over 16,00,000 rupees, amounting to a quarter of the total estimated cost. The remaining three-quarters were contributed by all the Sikh rulers put together.[12] Thus, 'everything that gold and marble could do was done'.[13] Revenue-free lands worth over a lakh of rupees a year were granted by the Maharaja to the *ardasias* and the *mutasaddis* of the Harmandir.[14]

According to a contemporary statement the number of persons who were formally associated with services in the Harmandir and its management was 500 to 600.[15] It may also be

9 Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat ut-Tawarikh* (tr V.S. Suri), III, 693.

10 Ibid, 589.

11 Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Sri Amritsar*, Kendri Singh Sabha Committee, Amritsar 1979, 28.

12 Ibid, 30.

13 V.N. Datta, *Amritsar Past and Present*, The Municipal Committee, Amritsar 1967, 178.

14 Ganda Singh (ed), *Tawarikh-i-Amritsar Ke Chand Makhiz*, 5.

15 Walter Hamilton, *The East India Gazetteer*, London 1828, I, 48, quoted in V. N. Datta, *Amritsar Past and Present*, 177.

expected that services were well organized. All offerings were not necessarily meant to be spent on the *langar* and the work of construction. Occasionally, therefore disputes could arise over the distribution of offerings among various individuals. This was because the Akalis had been customarily given a certain share. In January 1814, for example, the Maharaja 'called upon the *Akalis* and the men of Phula Singh Akalia and listened to their dispute and claims about their shares of income'.

> He ordered the men of Phula Singh that they should take only that portion as their share which was fixed as such since a long time, and should not claim anything more from the share of other Akalis, adding that if they claimed more than that in the future and if the Akalis complained again, he and his men would be turned out of Amritsar altogether. In short this dispute went on until noon, and in the end they agreed to act according to the order of the Noble Sarkar and then went away.[16]

It is evident from this case that the disputes relating to the distribution of offerings were settled by Ranjit Singh. It also implies that the management of the Harmandir was under his control.

The name of Bhai Sant Singh Giani figures as we have noticed before, in the inscription on the southern entrance of the Harmandir as the person through whom the 'service of gold and marble' was performed. In all probability, Bhai Sant Singh Giani was supervising the general management of the Harmandir on the authority of the Maharaja. Bhai Gurmukh Singh who is better known as the trusted courtier of the Maharaja, and who acted as the priest of the Maharaja and his family, was Bhai Sant Singh Giani's son. After Bhai Sant Singh's death in 1832, Bhai Gurmukh Singh succeeded to his

16 Garrett and Chopra, *Events at the Court of Ranjit Singh (1810-1817)*, 127.

position and continued to enjoy the Maharaja's confidence till his death in 1839.[17]

The authority of Maharaja Ranjit Singh to take up the responsibility of managing the affairs of the Harmandir was never questioned by anyone. We have seen already that even the disputes regarding the distribution of offerings were decided by him. However, on the question of maintaining the sanctity of the Harmandir with regard to the visits of dignified 'tourists' the Akalis were not prepared to make any compromise. During Alexander Burnes' visit to Amritsar in August 1831, Sardar Desa Singh Majithia as the governor of the Majha tract with his headquarters at Amritsar, had been entrusted the duty of conducting Burnes to the Harmandir. The report sent by Sardar Desa Singh Majithia is recorded by Sohan Lal Suri :

> A letter from Sardar Desa Singh came to the Maharaja. It is said that as soon as Burnes Sahib reached near Amritsar the said Sardar went out to receive him with great show of respect, enquired after his health, and, taking him along with himself, secured him the honour of enjoying the sacred sight of *Durbar Sahib*. On hearing the news of the glorious Sahib in *Harmandir Sahib* ordinary folk gathered together in a huge crowd and overcrowding of the public went to such an extent that on every roof, in every window, in every door, at every gate, in every thoroughfare nothing could be seen but men and women. The *Akalis* also gathered together in large numbers and began to raise great hue and cry abruptly on the arrival of the Sahibs and went on knocking at the door with so much severity that the proverb 'the mob are like the cattle' applied to the situation. The Sahibs enquired after the nature of that situation from the said Sardar, who said that it was simply a demonstration of happiness and pleasure

17 Shahamat Ali, *The Sikhs and Afghans*, Punjab Languages Department Patiala 1970 (reprint—first published 1847), 29 & 31.

> of the people and that it signified a welcome to the Sahibs. After that the Sahibs went to their camp and the formality of entertainment and hospitality towards the guests took place according to the emphatic orders of the Maharaja. The Maharaja felt very happy in hearing the contents of this letter.[18]

The anxiety of the Maharaja about the visit of Burnes to the Harmandir, interest of the general populace in his visit, and the satisfaction of Sardar Desa Singh that nothing unpleasant happened indicate that the visit of a European to the Harmandir was not liked by the Akalis.

Indeed, it was not always possible for foreigners to visit the Harmandir. Jacquemont, for instance, was not allowed by the guardian of the Harmandir to enter its precincts in March 1831.[19] The objection of the Akalis, readily conceded by the majority of the Sikhs, was to the keeping of the shoes on while entering the Darbar Sahib. Most of the foreigners were ignorant of the custom, and some of them were aggressive enough not to accept the suggestion. In 1843, two officers of the army of the East India Company, for instance, refused to take off their shoes on their visit to the Harmandir.[20] The Akalis generally were not prepared to tolerate this kind of an affront.

It is understandable, therefore, that Maharaja Ranjit Singh had to take due precautions when any state guest or important visitor was to be taken to the Harmandir. In 1838, for instance, Lord Auckland visited Amritsar, accompanied by his sister Emily Eden and the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Henry Fane. They were entertained by the Maharaja in a grand style. Troops dressed up in clothes of gold were lined up for miles along the route. Prior to Lord Auckland's arrival, the Maharaja reached Amritsar and made a personal inspection of the arran-

18 Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat ut-Tawarikh* (tr V.S. Suri), Daftar III, 73.

19 V. Jacquemont and Soltykoff, *The Punjab A Hundred Years Ago* (ed H.L.O. Garrett), Punjab Languages Department, Patiala 1971 (reprint), 34.

20 V.N. Datta, *Amritsar Past and Present*, 39.

gements. The Maharaja warned the people of Amritsar that if any of the Governor General's men was maltreated 'he would cut open their stomachs'.[21] This was precisely because a visit to the Harmandir was a part of Auckland's visit to Amritsar. As Sohan Lal Suri tells us, the custodians of the Akal Bunga and others had been ordered to illuminate the *bungas*.[22]

The Maharaja was particularly anxious about the Akalis who had developed a dislike for the English on political as well as religious grounds. But he was the master of the situation. On this occasion, Jamadar Khushal Singh 'presented fourteen *Nihang Singhs*, well-armed and dressed and with fine horses The Sarkar said to them that they should go to the Lat Sahib and talk about courage and bravery; but should not utter anything contrary to the friendship and unity between the two governments which should incur a complaint by the Lat Sahib'.[23] When Auckland visited the Harmandir on the day following there arose an argument about the propriety of his covering his shoes with a pair of dark stockings instead of removing them. But eventually he was admitted. He sat beside the Maharaja on the floor coverd with a carpet.[24] Elaborate arrangements for their visit had been made by Bhai Gurmukh Singh.[25]

Similar precautions were taken by Maharaja Ranjit Singh on the following day when he was informed that Emily Eden and the wife of Macnaughten wished to see the city and visit the Harmandir. The Maharaja ordered Sardar Ajit Singh Sandhanwalia and Sardar Lehna Singh Majithia to accompany the ladies. He also stressed that 'they should see that none of the citizens, *Akalis* or *Nihangs* should utter any undesirable word

21 Emily Eden, *Up The Country*, Londan 1866, 215.

22 Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat ut-Tawarikh* (tr V.S. Suri), III, 589.

23 Ibid, 590.

24 Emily Eden, *Up The Country*, 116.

25 Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat ut-Tawarikh* (tr V.S. Suri), III, 590-91.

which might create suspicion in their mind'.[26]

We can see in retrospect that Maharaja Ranjit Singh visited the Harmandir as a devout Sikh, made liberal offerings in cash and kind as a mark of his devotion, expressed his devotion further in his 'service' of the Harmandir as a service to Guru Ram Das, and acted as the custodian of the sacred place. The fact that his authority to look after the general management of the Harmandir was questioned by none indicates that his authority was based on a general acceptance.

26 Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat ut-Tawarikh* (tr V.S. Suri), III, 593.

Social Mobility in the Punjab Under Maharaja Ranjit Singh

Indu Banga*

The present paper is an attempt to analyse social mobility in the Punjab with reference to its overwhelmingly agrarian character and its political organization under Maharaja Ranjit Singh. A series of overlapping and interacting structural forms based on ownership, utilization and control of land can be identified during this period. The agrarian classes, who owned and cultivated land, and the ruling classes, who utilised and controlled its surplus produce, consitituted the most important structural units within this interactional context. Then there were some categories of people who held an 'intermediate' position between the producers and rulers, sharing in the distribution of resources with them.

Social mobility may be studied in terms of the redistribution of resources and power among different social strata and its effect on the people involved. The paper briefly underlines the pattern and direction of mobility among the agrarian classes and the Intermediaries, and then takes up the ruling class in the kingdom of Lahore in some detail.

The agrarian society at the beginning of Sikh rule was composed of at least three distinct levels : the peasant proprietors, the tenant cultivators and the non-cultivating 'primary *zamindars*'. They enjoyed hereditary rights over land or its produce and also interacted with the state from their respective

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positions. Numerically, and in terms of the area cultivated, the self-cultivating proprietors constituted the most important agrarian class in the Punjab. The next in importance were the tenant cultivators who tilled the land belonging to others and can be divided into two broad categories corresponding to the occupancy tenants and tenants-at-will under the British. The non-cultivating 'primary *zamindars*', holding one or several villages in proprietorship, formed the smallest of these strata. The lines between these three interacting levels were not very sharp, and the positions could interchange or overlap due to socio-economic and political factors as well as the policy of the state.

The general policy of Maharaja Ranjit Singh towards agrarian classes appears to have been guided by the 'security and development of revenues'. The state favoured all those who were prepared to keep the land under cultivation and pay the revenues, irrespective of their right or caste or tribe. Extension of cultivation and replacement of the deserter figured prominently in the standard instructions of the Maharaja to his *kardars* and *ijaradars*. The administrators advanced *taqavi* loans to the needy cultivators, provided help for the digging or repairing of wells or irrigation channels, and encouraged the prospective settlers in every possible way. Substantial increase in revenues, however, was effected through extensive colonization of wastelands. The state repaired and dug perennial and inundation canals and settled the pastoral tribes like the Labanas and the Gujjars as agriculturists in Gujranwala, Jhang and lower Sindh Sagar Doab. By the end of Ranjit Singh's reign, vast stretches of land in the central, north-western and south-western Punjab had been brought under cultivation. In fact, colonization of many villages in the Punjab dates back to the early nineteenth century.

Certain degree of spatial and upward mobility appears to be inbuilt in the process of colonization. There is evidence of the artisans and menials — like the *tarkhans*, *lohars*, *kumhars*, *telis*, *julahas*, *kalals*, *bhishtis*, *kahars* and *mochis* — colonising waste-

lands as tenants or pursuing agriculture along with their traditional occupation. Wherever they had been cultivating strips of land for a long time as village servants they were generally treated like other proprietors by the administrators. There is evidence also of the *lohars, tarkhans* and *kalals* cultivating land as co-sharing proprietors. The change of occupation improved their economic means and, in all probability, also raised their social status. Improvement in their economic condition was effected perhaps also through migration to the newly founded villages in their professional capacities.

All those who provided capital or labour towards colonization acquired hereditary rights in land. The formal distinctions among different levels of agriculturists, which hinged on the payment of *malikana* and liability of ejectment, decreased steadily during this period. In parts of the central Punjab, the hereditary tenants, most of whom were Jats, did not pay any *malikana* to the proprietors, while the amount of *malikana* was nominal in many other areas. Generally, the hereditary tenants were also allowed the rights of cutting timber, making gardens and digging wells, the rights normally distinguishing the tenants from proprietors. At the same time, the proprietor's right to sell was in effect circumscribed by the availability of vast stretches of uncultivated lands, offer of easy terms by the state to colonisers, and the preferential right of the proprietary bodies. The position of the settler and other tenants likewise became very similar in essence bacause the proprietors seldom exercised their right to eject tenants lest land should be under-cultivated. Ranjit Singh's rule was in fact favourable for 'the permanence of the cultivator's occupancy' which was considered essential for effecting improvements in land. To safeguard their revenue demand, the administrators generally protected the tenants of all descriptions against the proprietor's pressure for enhancement of *malikana* or ejectment, and levied 'burdens of all kinds' on 'all classes alike'. The tenants thus came to enjoy more or less the same rights and obligations as the peasant proprietors.

In tune with its levelising policy, the state slowly circum-

scribed the large non-cultivating 'primary *zamindars*' and created proprietary or quasi-proprietary tenures in favour of those who were prepared to invest capital or labour in land. These tenures were based on the purchase of land or the digging of wells or irrigation channels or tilling the lands of the non-cultivating proprietors or on sharing with the proprietors in the payment of land revenue. The well-sinkers — variously called *chakdars, sil dars* or *taraddadkars* — were mostly Khatris and Aroras who acquired hereditary and transferable rights in the south-western Punjab. A *chakdar's* right to break up wasteland could not be denied by the proprietor and if he himself wished to cultivate the land of the *chakdar*, he could do so only as the latter's tenant. The *chakdar* in due course became the proprietor called *adna malik*, and the former proprietor, called *a'ala malik*, became entitled only to a small, at many places, nominal portion of the produce called *haqq-i-zamindari*.

In the north-western Punjab and some other areas, the tenants and settlers acquired quasi-proprietary positions by providing protection to the proprietors against the encroachments of the neighbouring clans. In some cases such 'protectors' absorbed the actual proprietary right and the protected then sank to the level of tenants. There is evidence also of the ouster of refractory or indolent proprietors, like the Warises in Hazara, the Ghakkhars in Jehlam, and the Rajputs in the central Punjab, by their industrious tenants — mostly Jats, Arains and Kambohs — with the connivance probably of the Administration. The ousted proprietors tried to get 'what recognition they could' in the shape of a small, almost nominal, share of the produce. The intervention of the Administration in such matters was generally not in their favour. The state policy towards the large proprietors, in fact, seems not only to have reduced their power and resources but also discouraged their further proliferation.

A 'great and on the whole beneficent revolution in landed property' was thus effected during this period. The position of the tenant cultivator improved in relation to both the peasant proprietor and the non-cultivating 'primary *zamindar*.'

The ranks of the peasant proprietors were also strengthened by the decline in the position of the non-cultivating 'primary *zamindars*' whose reduced resources, and concomitant loss of power and prestige, indicated a downward trend. Furthermore, certain non-agriculturist elements like the trading Khatris and Aroras, the pastoral Labanas and Gujjars, the low-caste artisans and the menials, entered into the agrarian hierarchy. Considering the premium attached to the possession of land in a predominantly agrarian society, this may be treated as signifying upward social mobility.

Under the label Intermediaries, we may include all those groups who were placed between the state and the cultivators and who shared in the distribution of the surplus produce from land. They have been labelled as the 'superior' owners by the early British administrators and were variously called *malikan-i-a'ala, ta'alluqdars, pattidars* and *chaharmis* by the contemporaries. The *dharmarth* grantees and the local revenue functionaries, like the *muqaddams* and *chaudharis*, may also be included in this broad stratum which is distinguished from the strata above and below by its essentially non-cultivating and non-ruling character.

The *'ta'alluqdars'* during our period had been the descendants of dispossessed conquerers, rulers, *jagirdars*, revenue farmers and other officials. As already indicated, the 'ousted' proprietors had also joined their ranks. The *malikan-i-a'ala* and *'ta'alluqdars'* essentially held the same position. Their 'superier' right over the cultivators amounted to the collection of a small fee mostly in grain from the tract over which they had once exercised power, or proprietary right, or both. The amount of the quitrent varied in accordance with the claimant's antecedents and local situation. The state generally did not intervene in their behalf. On the whole, the ranks of the 'superior' owners were composed of the politically, economically and socially ineffective elements who received subsistence for what they had once been. By the end of Sikh rule, they had become the useless survivals of a bygone age.

Their near ouster from the socio-political scene effected under Ranjit Singh and his predecessors was not only a clear case of downward mobility, but it also signified a structural change of some magnitude.

However, some 'superior' rights sharing a similar fate were the creation of Sikh rule. To conciliate the locally influential persons, the Sikh rulers in general and Ranjit Singh in particular, allowed them a fourth of the revenues called *chaharam*. The *chaharam* given at conquest or soon afterwards, was often resumed after sometime, and substituted by a small subsistence allowance. Where the *'chaharmis'* were retained the original amount was fragmented like any property into numerous petty shares akin to the quitrent claimed by the *'ta'alluaqdars'* and the *malikan-i-a'ala*.

The *pattidars* who gradually came to be equated with the *'chaharmis'* were originally distinct from them. They were the descendants of the original Sikh conquerers who had received a share (*patti*) in the revenues of the territory acquired in a conjoint conquest. Such shares were fragmented through inheritance and became, within two generations, a form of cash headrent over the land held under various tenures. Thus, the position of the conquerers and the conquered, represented by the *pattidars* and the *chaharmis,* was assimilated in the process of downward mobility.

However, some intermediary categories maintained or even improved their position. The hereditary revenue functionaries —*chaudharis, muqaddams, qanungos* and *patwaris* — played a crucial role in revenue administration and may be collectively labelled as the *'khidmatguzars'*. All of them generally were the 'primary *zamindars'* in their own right, and the *chaudharis* and *muqaddams* also happened to be the social leaders of the locality. The rulers found it advantageous to conciliate them and retain their services, continuing their customary percentage of the revenues. In addition, at several places, these intermediaries were also given *chaharam,* rent-free land and

various other concessions in cash or kind. However, with the consolidation of the kingdom of Lahore an increasing abrogation of the influence and power of the *chaudharis* or the clan leaders was evident ; towards its end the practice of collecting revenues through the *muqaddams* became widely prevalent.

There was a considerable improvement in the position of the *dharmarth* grantees who also shared in the distribution of revenues. A large number of individuals and institutions enjoyed charitable grants of revenue-free land, made in terms of *bighas*. wells or villages. The general policy of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, like that of the early Sikh rulers, was to confirm the grants coming down from earlier times and make fresh ones to all faiths in their dominions. In this, Ranjit Singh was followed by the Sikh and non-Sikh *jagirdars*. Consequently, a large number of *khanqahs, masjids, bairagi* and *jogi* establishments and temples as well as *brahmans, pirzadas, sayyids, shaikhs*, and *qazis* not only continued their privileges coming down from the earlier times but also received fresh grants.

Individuals and institutions belonging to the Sikh faith, however, received the largest amount of *dharmarth* grants during this period. Besides the Harmandir and other important shrines and the persons attached to them, the recipients included the Udasis, the Nirmalas, the Akalis and above all, the descendants of the Gurus, particularly the Sodhis and the Bedis. Among the individuals, the Sodhis and the Bedis received the largest amount of revenues, while among the different orders in Sikhism, the Udasis perhaps were the greatest beneficiaries.

Notwithstanding occasional resumptions, the grantees coming down from the earlier period appear to have improved their position and strengthened their roots among the people. Individuals and institutions receiving grants of revenue for the first time definitely gained in their economic means and standing in society. Some of them, like the Sodhis and the Bedis, enjoyed large sums of revenue and wielded considerable influence in political and socio-religious circles. Area for

area, even if the grants given to the Sikhs are excluded, the number and categories of the *dharmarth* grantees as well as the area over which they were distributed, seem to have increased under Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

Extensive patronage of religious groups by Ranjit Singh and the other Sikh rulers was an expression as much of their 'practical good sense' as of their 'sense of piety' and 'catholic outlook'. Their piety was reflected in the consideration shown to the Sikh religious groups, while their catholicity enabled them to accord similar treatment to the non-Sikh religious institutions and individuals. It must be added, however, that the consolidation of the state required the conciliation of all classes of the subjects and no other sections could serve better as vested interests than those that commanded influence with the subject peoples and provided social links with the conquered territory. In fact, the general policy of Ranjit Singh towards all categories of Intermediaries— whether benefiting them or affecting them adversely — appears to have been guided by considerations of consolidation.

Consolidation of the state could not be effected without the ruling class which formed the apex of the social hierarchy. By the ruling class we mean a set of people who exercised certain amount of decision making power in political, administrative and military spheres at different levels in the government, and shared overwhelmingly in the distribution of the resources of the state. They may be further divided into primary and secondary levels of power structure on the bases of their role in the acquisition, maintenance and exercise of power, mode of sharing the surplus produce and the corresponding lifestyles. Accordingly, princes, ministers, courtiers, provincial governors and commanders in the army belonged to the primary level, and were paid very largely through *jagirs*. The *thanadars*, *kardars* and the officers in the army constituted the secondary level. They generally had a supportive role and were often paid cash salaries. Any strict ranking within and between the two levels — with the obvious exception of the 'regular' army — was

not noticeable, and the roles and positions frequently interchanged.

This broadly uniform stratum was heterogeneous in its composition, consisting of men belonging to different religions, races and regions. The pattern of social mobility may be studied with reference primarily to the social background of the Punjabi members of the ruling class.

According to a rough estimate, around 20 per cent of the members of the ruling class under Ranjit Singh were recruited from the existing aristocracy, including the dispossessed chiefs, who were mostly Rajputs and Pathans. From amongst the groups traditionally associated with government and administration, the Khatris, Aroras and the Banias as well as the *brahmans* and the *sayyids* were found in fairly large proportion, about 15 per cent. Their position as a group appears to have remained unchanged with the only difference that earlier they mostly served at the secondary levels whereas, under Ranjit Singh, quite a few of them came to hold the highest offices. In fact, with the expansion and consolidation of the kingdom of Lahore, the non-Sikh elements, like the Jamwals, the Faqirs, and the families of Diwan Mohkam Chand or Diwan Sawan Mal, appear to have improved their position *vis-a-vis* the Sikhs.

Considerable mobility is evident in the case of the Sikh members of the ruling class who constituted the majority, about 50 per cent of the total. Many of them started their career as troopers or attendants or even as ostlers, and became commanders, civil administrators and courtiers. The dominance of the Jats in the phase of conquest continued during the period of consolidation ; they formed nearly 30 per cent of the total. The individuals belonging to the professional castes, like the *tarkhans, kalals, nais* and the low-caste Sikhs called *mazhabis,* also made up a significant proportion, nearly 10 per cent. Without an exception, the Sikh members of the ruling class were *jagirdars,* enjoying a very large share in the revenues. The *jagirdari* system, in fact, reflected the official standing, social status and economic position of the recipients.

Nevertheless, a process of graduated fall from power may be seen in the case of many of the early conquerers among the Sikhs. They, or their descendants, successively held the position of sovereign rulers, autonomous chieftains, service *jagirdars*, and then, virtually the pensioners of the kingdom of Lahore, holding subsistence *jagirs*. The *jagirdars* of the dispossessed rulers, however, did not ordinarily suffer any fall in their position, because they were generally absorbed in the expanding administrative and military organization under Ranjit Singh. The promotion or demotion of a *jagirdar* was effected through an increase or decrease in his *jagirs*. The institution of *jagirdari* thus covered a variety of changing situations. On the one hand, it cushioned the downward mobility of the old aristocracy, whether Sikh or non-Sikh, who received service or subsistence *jagirs* in lieu of their lost territories, and on the other, provided a base for the upward mobility of those who received *jagirs* purely as remuneration or reward.

The lines of distinction and privilege enjoyed by the new ruling class appear to have hardened by the end of the kingdom of Lahore. With a view perhaps to motivating and involving a large number of people in the interests of the state, Ranjit Singh had rewarded the new members of the ruling class rather generously. The large *jagirs*, power and influence enjoyed, for example, by the Jamwal brothers, the Sandhanwalia *sardars* and Hari Singh Nawla, set the standard of acquisitiveness and display of wealth for others.

A sizeable proportion of the income of the new ruling class was spent on conspicuous consumption which appears to have been connected with their quest for prestige. Under Maharaja Ranjit Singh, they lived in large fortlike mansions; adorned themselves with silks and jewels; employed numerous retainers; indulged in expensive pasttimes like hunting; spent recklessly on social ceremonies and festivals; constructed buildings, *baolis* and gardens; patronised artists, musicians and dancers; and above all, patronised *brahmans* and observed *brahmanical* rituals. Many of them emulated the rulers also in

their religious charities and fabrication of genealogies.

It is not possible to discern a uniform pattern and direction of social mobility in the Punjab under Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Mobility varied due to factors like the area and the segment of population or the duration and nature of its interaction with the state. There nevertheless appears to have been a greater interaction between state and society which provided the impetus for social mobility in all directions — upward, downward and horizontal. In terms of numbers, on the whole, the upward mobility appears to have been much freer and the instances of downward movement relatively much fewer. The Sikh movement normatively did not recognize any hereditary barriers to upward mobility, and even nurtured an ethos which valued individual effort and achievement. This appears to have provided an environment conducive to greater openness of society and a change in the structure of opportunity. The doors to upward mobility were open to men of industry and ability perhaps at all levels of the social structure.

However, there is no evidence of any significant structural change, let alone a societal change, though the tenant cultivators, large 'primary *zamindars*' and various categories of Intermediaries were affected as groups by socio-political developments. There is no evidence of corporate mobility, and the individual and the family largely remained the unit of mobility under Sikh rule. Because of the rapid political and military developments of the period, change often occurred within a generation. The maximum impact of Sikh rule was noticeable perhaps in the case of the ruling class, and yet there was structural and functional continuity, with a change only of the incumbents. In fact, despite a somewhat different ethos, the period was very much a part of the medieval Indian polity and economy. It possibly could not engender large scale mobility without a diversification of the regional economy and technological change. Nevertheless, social mobility set afoot in certain directions matured later, under the British.

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Agricultural Production in the Punjab under Maharaja Ranjit Singh

Sukhwant Singh*

During the early nineteenth century, cultivation of land was the chief source of the income of the people of the Punjab and its rulers. The present paper examines the nature and extent of cultivation system and trade in agricultural produce as well as the policy of the state towards agriculture in the Punjab under Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The scope of this study is confined to the Punjab plains under the direct administration of the Maharaja.[1] During his reign, agriculture not only recovered from the effects of constant warfare, which characterised the eighteenth century, but also expanded considerably.[2] The paper is based on the contemporary English and non-English sources and the early British records.

Process of cultivation in the Punjab in the early nineteenth century was essentially similar to what was in operation at the

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1 For the territories of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, see Indu Banga, Map of "The Area of Sikh Dominions", *Agrarian System of the Sikhs : Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century*, Manohar Publications, New Delhi 1978.

2 Besides warfare, the terrible famine of 1783 had caused an extreme scarcity of grain all over the Punjab : Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat ut-Tawarikh* (tr Amarwant Singh, seen in typescript), Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, Daftar II, 19. There had also been a marked shift in the south-western Punjab from agricultural to pastoral pursuits during the eighteenth century : C.A. Roe and W.E. Purser, *Report on the Revised Land Revenue Settlement of Montgomery District in the Mooltan Division of the Punjab 1878* (all settlement reports cited hereafter are prefixed with *SR*), 14-15 & 38.

end of the century. It consisted of diffrent operations such as ploughing, sowing, harrowing, weeding (hoeing), fencing, watching, reaping, threshing and winnowing. Land was ploughed by the wooden plough to make it fit for sowing. Three methods of sowing were prevalent : scattering *(chhatta)*, drilling *(pora)*, and dibbling or putting the seed into the furrow *(kera)*. Fields were harrowed by *suhaga* to crush clods, smoothen the surface and cover the seed. Weeds were removed by hand-hoeing; the usual process was known as *godi* but when the manure was also put around the plants it was called *choki*. Fields near the village and along the roads were fenced with thorny branches to save the crop from animals. To keep away the birds scare-crows and raised platforms *(manna)* were put up in the fields. Crops were reaped by hand. Several methods were used for threshing. Wheat and barley were threshed with *phalla* made of wooden sticks and straw; rice, millets and pulses with *merh*--bullocks without *phalla*; and maize with sticks. After threshing, winnowing was done to separate the grain from the straw by shaking the threshed crop in the wind with *chhajj*, a winnowing basket.[3]

A large number of implements were used in the process of cultivation. More important were the plough, yoke, harrow, spade, sickle, hoe, fodder-cutter and sugarcane press. All these were of simple construction, manufactured very largely in the village itself. With a few exceptions, like the sickle, spade, hoe and fodder-cutter, the implements were made of

[3] For example, *SR Montgomery 1878*, 98-101 & 129; *SR Hazara 1868-74*, 95; *SR Ludhiana 1859*, 10-14.

It may be interesting to know that certain customary 'superstitions' were observed in the process of cultivation. It was considered unlucky to commence agricultural operations on the 5th, 7th, 9th, 10th, 12th and 24th days of the month as the ground was supposed to be sleeping on these days. Sunday, Monday and Thursday were considered the best days to commence sowing. From the time the crop was cut till it was finally weighed the agriculturist was on his guard against the demons and goblins. Friday being a regular weekly holiday of goblins it was considered unfit for commencing winnowing. Help of the *mulana* and the *pandit* was taken to keep away the evil spirits : see for example, *SR Montgomery 1878*, 98 & 101.

wood. But the iron implements had handles made of wood. The fodder-cutter *(toka)*, for instance, was a piece of iron in the shape of a razor attached to a wooden handle. The plough was made of wood with a pointed share *(phala)* of iron.[4] Iron was imported from the hilly districts of Kangra and Kulu and the region north of Peshawar.[5] In the thickly cultivated tracts the number of implements in use was larger [6]

Cultivation system in the Punjab centered round two harvests : *rabi* and *kharif*. The *rabi* (spring) crop was sown in October and November and harvested from April to June. The *kharif* (autumn) crop, with the exception of cotton and sugar-cane, which were sown in March and April, was sown from June to August and harvested from September to December. The important *rabi* crops were wheat, barley, gram, rapeseed, linseed, tobbacco, poppy, cumin, fodder and vegetables. Important *kharif* crops were cotton, millets, sugarcane, rice, sesasme, beans, hemp, pulses, fodders, vegetables and maize which was intro duced in India in all probability in the early nineteenth century.[7] Where artificial irrigation was available in the winter the *rabi* crops occupied more area than the *kharif*. In the south western Punjab, however, the *kharif* crops were more important.[8]

Agriculture in the Punjab was dominated by cereals. Excluding the area under fodder crops, about 90 per cent of the

[4] *SR Montgomery 1878* Appendix I; *Jhelam District Gazetteer 1883-84* (all district gazetteers cited hereafter are prefixed by *DG*), 96; *DG Ludhiana 1888-89*, 123-24; *DG Amritsar 1892-93*, 90-92; *DG Shahpur 1897*, 163-65; *Imperial Gazetteer of India : Provincial Series, Punjab*, 1908, I, 58-59.

[5] *SR Hazara 1868-74*, 95. See also, Fauja Singh (ed). *Punjab di Sair* (tr Giani Lal Singh), Punjabi University, Patiala 1971, 54-55 & 63.

[6] See the author's *Agricultural Development in the Punjab Plains 1849-1947*, M. Phil Dissertation, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar 1979, 28-29 & 36-37.

[7] Irfan Habib, "The Technology and Economy of Mughal India", *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, XVII, No. 1 (1980), 4.

[8] *SR Umritsur 1856-60*, 19-26 & 31-35; *SR Montgomery 1878*, 107&113-25; *DG Amritsar 1883-84*,36-37; *DG Jhelam 1883-84*, 106-08; *Imperial Gazetteer: Punjab*, I, 58-60. See also, Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, 6-8.

remaining cultivated land was under cereals. Wheat was the most important crop among them. It was cultivated almost all over the Punjab. In the tracts with insufficient irrigation, inferior soil and poverty of human capital, barley and gram were of considerable importance. Rice and sugarcane cultivation was confined to the highly irrigated and inundated areas and centered chiefly in the upper Rachna, upper Bari and Jullundur Doabs Where the cultivation of rice and sugarcane was not possible maize and millets were the chief *kharif* cross.[9]

The cultivation of cash crops was comparatively limited. The area under cash crops varied between 5 and 10 per cent of the total cultivated area in the Punjab. Important cash crops were sugarcane, cotton, indigo, oil-seeds, drugs and spices.[10] In Amritsar district, cash crops occupied 6 per cent of the cultivated area.[11] Adinanagar and Batala *parganas* of Gurdaspur district had about 9 per cent area under cash crops.[12] In Jullundur district, sugarcane occupied 5½ per cent of the cultivated area, while cotton was grown mainly for home consumption.[13] In fact, cotton was grown almost all over the Punjab and sugarcane was mostly grown in the upper *doabs*.[14] Indigo was grown largely around Muzaffargarh, Dera Ghazi Khan and Multan.[15] Tobacco was grown mostly in riverain areas, particularly in the western Punjab.[16] Spices like ginger, turmeric,

[9] *SR Umritsur 1856-60*, 17, 42, 44, 114-25, 155-56 & 193; *SR Gurdaspur 1856-59*, 36, 39, 48, 64-67 & 70; *SR Adinanagar Pergunnah 1856-59*, 21; *SR Jullundhur 1852*, 15, 70 & 72; *SR Ludhiana 1859*; 7-13; *SR Hazara 1868-74*, 87-89; *SR Montgomery 1878*, 5 & 126-27; Mohan Lal, *Travel in Punjab, Afghanistan and Turkistan to Balk, Bokhara, and Herat and a visit to Great Britain and Germany*, K.P. Bagchi & Company, Calcutta 1977 (2nd rev ed—first published 1846), 20 & 219.

[10] Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, 7, 92-93 & n21.

[11] *SR Umritsur 1856-60*, 19-35 & 114-15.

[12] *SR Gurdaspur 1856-59*, 64-67.

[13] *SR Jullundhur 1852, 15.*

[14] Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, 92-93 & n 21.

[15] Mohan Lal, *Travel in Punjab*, 243 & 247. See also, *Imperial Gaztteer : Punjab*, I, 60-62.

[16] *SR Ludhiana 1859*, 7-11; *SR Hazara 1868-74*, 87-89. See also, Mohan Lal, *Travel in Punjab*, 16.

chillies and peppers were generally grown in manured and irrigated land close to the villages.[17]

Agricultural produce was supplemented by the garden produce. Fruit bearing trees such as mangoes, oranges and dates were grown in the Punjab. Mangoes were a paying crop in the Bist-Jullundur, lower Bari and lower Sind Sagar Doabs. In the latter two regions, date-palms were also a source of considerable income.[18]

Agriculture though traditional was not primitive. The crops like wheat and sugarcane had superior and inferior varieties.[19] The cultivators also recognized the idea of soil renovation, for which a simple system of rotation was followed. It was either to leave the land fallow for sometime or after certain cycle of seasons to substitute the land sown with *rabi* crops by *kharif* crops and vice versa. A succession of crops was practised chiefly in the highly manured lands. The first sowing mostly consisted of cereals, sugarcane and other crops which exhausted the soil, and the second sowing of fodder crops, pulses and the like.[20]

Organic manure was used in irrigated and *sailab* lands to increase the productivity of the soil. The manure consisted of cow-dung, other animal excrements. litter, vagetable refuse, ashes and rubbish, and sweeping of houses, and it was heaped

17 *Imperial Gazetteer : Punjab*, I, 61.

18 Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, 8 & 105; Mohan Lal, *Travel in Punjab*, 26; H. E. Fane, *Five Years in India*, Punjab Languages Department, Patiala 1970 (reprint), II, 18, 116 & 120; *Imperial Gazetteer : Punjab*, I, 62.

19 *SR Umritsur 1856-60*, 42. See also, Harbans Singh, "Agriculture in the Punjab During the Maharaja's Reign", *Maharaja Ranjit Singh : First Death Centenary Memorial* (ed Teja Singh & Ganda Singh), Punjab Languages, Department, Patiala 1970 (reprint), 145-46.

20 *Report on the Administration of the Punjab and Its Dependencies for the Year 1875-76 : Supplement* (all the administration reports cited hereafter are prefixed as *PAR*), xi-xiii; *SR Jullundhur 1852*, 16; *SR Ludhiana 1859*, 13; *SR Umritsur 1856-60*, 43; *SR Montgomery 1878*, 102-03; *SR Hazara 1868-74*, 90-92.

outside the village. But the regularly manured area was very small. Manuring was much practised in the vicinity of villages, wells, and hilly areas. It was used largely for sugarcane, wheat, cotton, poppy, rice and vegetables.[21] However, in areas with scarcity of fuel, much of the cow-dung was burnt by the people for fuel purposes.[22]

Double cropping was in currency in some parts of the Punjab. In Jullundur, Ludhiana and Kangra districts, for instance, the land with high fertility, regular irrigation and use of manure bore two crops in a year. But, the double cropped area was small and most of the land usually bore one crop in a single year.[23] The yield was also affected by a number of diseases and natural agencies.[24] The maximum yield in *pakka* maunds per acre for various crops was, wheat about 16, barley 20, rice 18 and cotton (uncleaned) 6. The yield per acre was nearly double in irrigated and *sailab* areas than in the unirrigated areas.[25]

The backbone of agriculture in the Punjab, in fact, was artificial irrigation. The natural means of irrigation in the Punjab were rainfall and river inundation called *sailaba*. However, the cultivation of superior crops, like wheat, rice and sugarcane

21 *PAR 1875-76 : Supplement*. ix-xi; *SR Umritsur 1856-60*, 42 & 155; *SR Jullundhur 1852*, 17.

22 Mohan Lal, *Travel in Punjab*, 4.

23 See for example, *SR Jullundhur 1852*; 59; *SR Ludhiana 1859*, 11-13; *SR Kangra 1865-72*, 75-76.

24 The various diseases affecting the yield were *kungi*, a black rust that attacked wheat, barley and *massar* and decreased production; *khadur*, an orange colour rust, affected the leaves and stalks; *khudru*, a wheat disease, made the grain small and black; *tela*, a small yellow and greenwinged insect that ate crops; *hada* or withering away of plants was caused by excessive heat and dryness; *bhakri* and *tuklamar* were insects that ate the ears of corn; and *chitri*, whitespots on leaves, occurred on *moth*, *mung* and *til* and no grain was formed.

Besides diseases, crops were harmed in the stage of grain formation by birds, animals, wind and lightening : *SR Montgomery 1878*, 110-113.

25 Ibid, 126. There were regional variations in yield : *Imperial Gazetteer : Punjab*, I, 59-61.

outside the inundated areas, and of all crops in the regions with scanty rainfall, was impossible without artificial irrigation. The major means of artificial irrigation were wells, canals, *jhallars*, embankments, water-cuts and river inlets. Of these the wells were the most important.

Irrigation from wells was confined to the plain country particularly where the water level was near the surface. The Bist-Jullundur, upper Bari and Rachna Doabs, and the riverain tracts elsewhere, had more wells than other regions. In the *bars* of the south-western Punjab well irrigated areas were likeli ttle oases in the wilderness.[26] By the end of Sikh rule, the Punjab had 1,42,556 wells of all sorts.[27] Taking the regional differentiation into account the average irrigated area per well was never more than ten acres. Thus the regularly irrigated area by the wells was about fourteen lakh acres. During our period, the well was also considered a measure of land, particularly where artificial irrigation was needed most.[28]

Broadly speaking, the wells were of two categories : *pakka* (masonary) and *kachcha* (unbricked). Of these, the masonary wellswere more important, but irrigation from them was almost confined to the uplands. Where the water level was near the surface they usually worked with wooden persian wheel (*harat*) equipped with earthen vessels called *tinds*.[29] Large wells

26 See for instance, *SR Jullundhur 1852*, 15-16; *SR Gurdaspur 1856-59*, 58-59, 100-01 & 104-05; *SR Umritsur 1856-60*, 42 & 155; *SR Montgomery 1873*, 15; *Punjab Canal Gazetteers*, I, 9-10.

27 *Report on the Land Revenue Administration of the Punjab and Its Dependencies for 1861-62*, Lahore 1862, 148

28 Area allotted to a well varied from 25 to 50 acres. It does not mean that all this area was regularly irrigated by the well but water could be carried out to that extent of the surface. Irrigated area per well varied from 16 acres in Amritsar to 11 acres in Gurdaspur and only four acres in the sandy tracts of Ludhiana : *SR Umritsur 1856-60*, 41-42; *SR Gurdaspur 1856-59*, 58-59; *SR Ludhiana 1859*, 13; H. M. L. Lawrence, *Adventures of An Officer in the Punjab*, Punjab Languages Department, Patiala 1970 (reprint — first published 1883), I, 241.

29 The wooden persian wheel which was brought to India in the thirteenth or fourteenth century, had by the sixteenth century, become the peasant's

worked with two or more persian wheels. The persian wheel was not very effective where the water was very deep ; a leathern bucket attached to a rope was used to lift the water from deep wells. The apparatus was called *charsa*. The *kachcha* wells, on the other hand, were in frequent use in the riverain areas where water level was high. They were mostly unbricked and usually lasted for one or two years. Because they could fall in at any time, they were rarely worked with the persian wheel; *charsa* or *dhingli* was generally used to lift the water from *kachcha* wells.[30] Their irrigating capacity was inferior to that of the masonary wells.[31]

Next in importance were canals. Canal irrigation was of more significance in the south-western than in the north-eastern Punjab. The canals were of two types: perennial and inundation. The perennial canals worked almost throughout the year and were managed by the state. Irrigation by them was concentrated in the upper Bari and Rachna Doabs. Ranjit Singh made efforts to use canal water on a larger scale than any of his Sikh predecessors, because no single ruler before him controlled territories large enough to cover a whole canal.[32] The Hasli canal, a branch of the famous Shah Nahr which had remained neglected in the late eighteenth century, was renovated and extended. It had two branches going to Amritsar and Lahore. Between Madhopur and Dinanagar the Hasli canal irrigated 18,787 acres by 1849.[33] Considerable amount of water

principal means of water-lift in the Indus-Jamuna region and remained largly a feature of this area : Irfan Habib, "The Technology and Economy of Mughal India", 3-4.

30 *Dhingli* was a long wooden lever attached with weight on the one end and with a bucket attached to a rope on the other. It was operated manually : *SR Umritsar 1856-60*, 42.

In the water part, the *kachcha* wells were lined with a cylinder made of wood or branches of *pilchhi*, *kana* and mulbery tree which saved the well from early falling.

31 *SR Umritsur 1856-60*, 42; *SR Gurdaspur 1856-59*, 58-59; *SR Ludhiana 1859*, 11 & 13-15; *SR Montgomery 1878*, 90-93.

32 Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, 6-7 n 17.

33 *Baree Doab Canal Project 1850*, 15-18; *DG Gurdaspur 1883-84*, 7-8.

from the river Ravi was also converted into the stream Deg by constructing a canal near Shahdara.[34] Wazirabad-Jammu area too had many canals.[35] In *ta'alluqa* Narot of Gurdaspur district canals irrigated 48 per cent of the cultivated area.[36] In fact, the submontane areas enjoyed good canal irrigation everywhere in the Punjab.

Bulk of the canals, however, were inundation canals. The inundation canals worked only during the rainy season when water in the rivers was sufficient to enter into them. Some of these canals were improvements on the earlier ones, while the others were constructed afresh either by the state or by private individuals with state help.[37] These canals took their supply from the Satlej, Ravi, Chenab, Jehlam and Indus rivers. They may be classified into Multan, Derajat and Shahpur canals. Irrigation from them was confined to some miles along their course. In construction they were rather simple, and worked for few summer months only. Irrigation from them was generally done by lift and most of them took their supply from the sub-channel and not from the main channel of the river. In the Multan series, there were 23 canals of a total length of 619 miles excavated from the Satlej and Chenab rivers.[38] In Shahpur series, there were sixteen canals irrigating about 45,000 acres.[39] Although, irrigation from inundation canals was uncertain, yet they were most essential for the prosperity of the country protected by them.[40]

Irrigation from embankments, water cuts, river inlets, *jhallars* and *jhatta* was of minor importance. The submontane and the nearby areas were interspersed by numerous streams and rivulets. The cultivators cut channels, at places called

34 *SR Montgomery 1878*, 5.

35 *Umdat ut-Tawarikh*, II, 298.

36 *SR Gurdaspur 1856-59*, 96.

37 See for instance, *SR Montgomery 1878*, 6-9 & 14.

38 *PAR 1849-51*, 90; *PAR 1851-53*, 170-72.

39 *DG Shahpur 1897*, 159.

40 *SR Montgomery 1878*, 89.

kuhal, by making embankments on these rivulets, and used their water for irrigation. Irrigation by embankments was practised in Peshawar, Attock, Hazara, Rawalpindi, Jehlam, Kangra, Hoshiarpur and parts of Gujrat, Sialkot and Gurdaspur districts.[41] Water cuts or *chhars* were similar to the inundation canals but they were very small in length and breadth. They were made on the *nallas* by the villagers in the vicinity and remained under the control of the village to which they belonged.[42] River inlets or creeks were the abandoned beds of the rivers which were filled with water during the floods and when the river fell they were transformed into lakes and water was used for irrigation.[43] *Jhallars* and *jhattas* were used along the banks of the drainage channels, small water courses, and *chhambs* and ponds. The working capacity of a *jhallar* was half that of a well.[44] On account of the uncertain nature of irrigation from these minor sources no estimate of the total area irrigated by them can be made. In all probability, excluding the *sailaba* areas, between one-sixth and one-fifth of the total cultivated area in the Punjab under Maharaja Ranjit Singh was regularly irrigated.

The extent of cultivated over the total area was determined not only by the means of artificial irrigation, but also by the amount of rainfall. In the Punjab, rainfall was scanty, variable and unevenly distributed. Rainfall divided the Punjab plains into horizontal zones, running parallel to the hills, decreasing with increase in the distance from the hills.[45] The submontane belt had an annual rainfall ranging from 30 to 40 inches, while in the belt next to it, consisting of Ludhiana,

41 *SR Gurdaspur 1856-59*, 2 & 89; Mohan Lal, *Travel in Punjab*, 21 & 31-32; *DG Jhelam 1883-84*, 13. See also, Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, 6-7.

42 *SR Montgomery 1878*, 9-10.

43 Ibid, 5-6.

44 Ibid, 5, 14 & 93; *SR Gurdaspur 1856-59*, 7.

45 Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, 6.

Jullundur, Amritsar, Lahore, Gujranwala, Jehlam, Shahpur, Attock and Peshawar rainfall was between 20 and 30 inches. Elsewhere, it was quite below this standard and the minimum was in the Multan region, remaining below 10 inches. The ratio of the cultivated area decreased with a decrease in the amount of rainfall. This was, particularly true of the Punjab plains outside the riverain areas.[46]

The nature of cultivation in the riverain tract also remained uncertain and uneven. A single season often changed the bed of the rivers for several miles. Occasionally the fertile lands during the floods were covered with unfertile sand.[47] On the whole, the soil in the lower portions of the *doabs* was fertile but due to the lack of irrigation, the region remained mostly uncultivated. Good cultivation was confined to a space about ten miles along the riverain tracts and around scattered wells.[48]

Within the uplands too cultivation varied considerably. Usually the *doabs* had luxuriant cultivation towards the edges and a ridge of barren sand in the centre.[49] The Bist-Jullundur Doab was the exception as it was the smallest *doab*,

[46] Donald McLeod, *Report on the Census taken on the 1st January, 1855 of the Population of the Punjab Territories*, Calcutta Gazette Office, Calcutta 1856: *Selections from the Records of the Government of India* (Foreign Department), No. XI, 30-33; A Roberts, *Report on the Census of the Punjab 1868*, Lahore 1870, 10; D.C.J. Ibbetson, *Report on the Census of the Punjab 1881*, Calcutta 1883, 37.

[47] *SR Gurdaspur 1856-59*, 9; Mohan Lal, *Travel in Punjab*, 4,14,22,223 & 229-30. See also, H.E. Fane, *Five Years in India*, II, 15 & 117.

[48] Drought stricken forests and brushwood of spontaneous growth was extensively found. Considerable population, particularly in the lower Sind Sagar, lower Rachna and lower Bari Doabs, followed pastoral pursuits: Mohan Lal, *Travel in Punjab*, 222 & 235-36; *Umdat ut-Tawarikh*, II, 107; H.M.L. Lawrence, *Adventures of An Officer in the Punjab*, II, 474 & 490-92; *SR Montgomery 1878*, 2-3 & 16-23; *PAR 1849-51*, 80; H.E. Fane, *Five Years in India*, II, 8-11; *Punjab Canal Gazetteers*, I, 9; *The Youngest Punjab Canal Colony*, Government Printing, Lahore 1930, 1.

[49] *PAR 1849-51*, 2-4; *Report on the Census of the Punjab 1855*, 17-18.

and with its rich agricultural resources, it was fairly well cultivated throughout its length and breadth.[50] The other exception was the belt constituting the north-east and north-west area of the Punjab where rainfall with some artificial irrigation was adequate for the maturity of crops.[51] However, within the comparatively thickly cultivated area, there were many uncultivated tracts, including the grazing grounds for the government cattle and forests in the upper Rachna Doab.[52] In the Chaj Doab also, there were 'vast tracts of jungle, extending for miles and miles, and without a *beegah* of cultivation'.[53]

There was thus great regional differentiation in the extent of cultivation. The upper Bari Doab, Jullundur Doab and the Peshawar Valley were the most thickly cultivated tracts that had from 50 to 70 per cent of the total area under cultivation. The upper Chaj and upper Rachna Doab came next with a ratio of 40 to 50 per cent between the total and the cultivated area. The proportion of the cultivated area in other regions ranged between 10 to 20 per cent. On the whole, in the Punjab under Maharaja Ranjit Singh, about one-fourth of the total area was under the plough.[54]

50 *SR Jullundhur 1852*, 3. See also, Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, 111 n 92.

51 There were some most thickly cultivated tracts such as Munjkee in the Jullundur Doab, Sujanpur in the upper Bari Doab and Dharap in the upper Rachna Doab : *SR Gurdaspur 1856-59*, 34-35; *SR Umritsur 1856-60*, 26 & 142-43; *SR Jullundhur 1852*, 65. See also, Mohan Lal, *Travel in Punjab*, 24 & 224; H.E. Fane, *Five Years in India*, II, 110-11.

52 The forests occupied considerable area between Shahdara and Wazirabad : H.L.O. Garrett and G L. Chopra (tr & ed), *Events at the Court of Ranjit Singh, 1810-17*, Punjab Languages Department, Patiala 1970 (reprint), 147, 208 & 214; *Umdat ut-Tawarikh*, II, 381 & 404.

53 L. Bowring to J. Lawrence. *Foreign Secret Consultation*, 28 April 1848, No. 65, quoted in Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, 7 n18.

54 To be precise, the total area of the Punjab at the time of annexation was 52.8 million acres of which 11.8 millian acres were cultivated. Thus the cultivated area was about 23 per cent of the toral area : *Report on the Census of the Punjab 1855*, 30-33. See also, *Report on the Land Revenue Administration of the Punjab and Its Dependencies for 1861-62*, 1 48; *Report on the Census of the Punjab 1868*, Statement No. IV, 26-29.

There is considerable evidence of cultivation for the market during this period. Marketing of the produce at local level — within the village, between different villages in the same locality, and between the town and its hinterland — was prevalent on a large scale. The large size of non-agriculturist population which formed between 40 to 50 per cent of the total population offered a wide market for the surplus produce.[55] Almost every *pargana* had half a dozen towns, and also a number of flourishing and large villages, all with small *bazars* or *mandis* available for the disposal of the surplus produce.[56] Producers sold their produce in two ways. Either they took it directly to the nearby town or sold it to the traders in the villages. In case of certain special crops the big traders in the towns and cities themselves contacted with the producers in the villages. Many of them had their agents or relatives living in villages who maintained shops *(hattis)* and transacted the business of both the village grocers and money-lenders.[57]

The long distance trade was carried on between different parts of the Punjab. The Khatris, Aroras, Khojas and Parachas were the chief trading castes.[58] Greater quantity of superior crops like wheat, cotton and sugar was sold.[59] The Bedis of Wyrowal and Goindwal exported sugar and cotton to Multan and, in return, imported *majith*, a dye, for Amritsar and Jullundur markets.[60] Sugar was extensively exported from Talwandi-Narowal *pargana* to all parts of the Punjab. In fact,

55 In 1855, when the first census of the Punjab was taken, the non-agriculturists formed 44 per cent of the total population of the Punjab: *Report on the Census of the Punjab 1855*, 22-23.

56 See for example, *SR Umritsur 1856-60*, 153; *SR Hazara 1868-74*, 71; *SR Gurdaspur 1856-59*, 16; *SR Adinanagar Pergunnah 1856-59*, 21; *SR Ludhiana 1859*, 33. See also, Indu Banga, "State-Formation under Sikh Rule", *Journal of Regional History*, I (1980), 30 n43.

57 See for example, *SR Umritsur 1856-60*, 67; and *SR Jullundhur 1852*, 3.

58 D.C.J. Ibbetson, *Panjab Castes*, Punjab Languages Department, Patiala 1970 (reprint — first published 1916),247-53. See also, *SR Montgomery 1878*, 52; *SR Hazara 1868-74*, 71; *SR Jullundhur 1852*, 14.

59 *SR Umritsur 1856-60*, 43.

60 Ibid, 67-68.

traders from the Punjab came during the season and themselves took away the sugar produced here.[61] Saccharine, turmeric and rice of Shakargarh *pargana* had equally extensive reputation.[62] Rice, ginger and dyes of the hills were brought to the plains and cotton of the plains was exported to the hills.[63] The town of Kalabagh received grains from the east of the river Jehlam.[64] Turmeric and ginger were sent to Multan from Amritsar.[65] Rice, turmeric and hemp were sent from Sujanpur to Amritsar and Lahore.[66]

External trade in agricultural produce was carried on chiefly with Afghanistan and Central Asian countries and, to a limited extent, with Sind and Hindustan. It was mainly in the hands of certain specialised groups, like the Lohanis, Khojas and Shikarpuris.[67] All the cities and towns situated on trade routes, such as Amritsar, Lahore, Multan, Rawalpindi, Peshawar and Dera Ghazi Khan were centres of external trade in agricultural produce. There were two chief trade routes through the plain country. The first and the most frequented route was through Amritsar, Lahore, Multan and Dera Ghazi Khan. The second was via Amritsar, Lahore, Wazirabad, Rawalpindi, Peshawar and Kabul. A third route was through the hilly area of Ladakh and Kashmir. Amritsar was the chief centre of trade.[68]

61 *SR Umritsur 1856-60*, 153. The superfine variety of sugar produced in the Punjab was celebrated and even the visitors of Ranjit Singh presented slabs of native sugar as *nazar* : Garrett and Chopra, *Events at the Court of Ranjit Singh 1810-17*, 182-83, 190-91, 205-08, 215, 227, 260, 263 & 269-71.

62 *SR Gurdaspur 1856-59*, 88.

63 See for instance, *SR Ludhiana 1859*, 32-34.

64 H.E. Fane, *Five Years in India*, II. 116.

65 Mohan Lal, *Travel in Punjab*, 243.

66 *SR Gurdaspur 1856-59*, 12 & 14-15.

67 Mohan Lal, *Travel in Punjab*, 239. See also, J.S. Grewal and Indu Banga (tr & ed), *Early Nineteenth Century Panjab*, Guru Nanak (Dev) University, Amritsar 1975, 31, 76, 109 & 123.

68 *SR Umritsur 1856-60*, 14; *SR Montgomery 1878*, 25; J.S. Grewal and Indu Banga, *Early Nineteenth Century Panjab*, 133; Mohan Lal, *Travel in Panjab*, 5 & 243; V. Jacquemont, *Punjab a Hundred Years Ago* (ed H.L.O. Garrett), Punjab Languages Department, Patiala 1970 (reprint), 26-27; David

It were not the bulky foodgrains but cash crops which were the chief articles of foreign trade. In the 1830s, the country around Dera Ghazi Khan annually produced 13,000 maunds of indigo of which only 25 maunds were used in the region. In 1835, the Lohani and Shikarpuri merchants sent 1,500 'loads' of indigo from Multan and Dera Ghazi Khan to Khurasan. In the same year, the value of agricultural produce and goods manufactured from it, which were exported from Multan to Khurasan and Turkistan, was Rs. 5,50,000, while the articles exported to Hindustan valued at Rs. 50,000.[69] Other important articles of export were wheat, rice, sugar, cotton, poppy, pepper and dried ginger.[70] Merchants from Kabul frequently visited Peshawar and Rawalpindi and brought the produce of the upper countries to the Punjab. Dry fruits and silk figured prominently in the articles imported.[71]

Prices of agricultural produce fluctuated greatly depending on the demand and supply in different regions and seasons.[72] Apart from the scarcity and glut conditions, slow movement of bulky foodgrains from the surplus to scarcity and famine affected areas was the major cause of regional price differentiation and occasional big hikes in prices. High or low prices for various crops had a direct relationship with the value of the respective crop. Average price of principal crops in seers

Ross, *The Land of the Five Rivers and Sindh*, Punjab Languages Department, Patiala 1970 (reprint — first published 1883), 89-90. See also, A. Gauba, "Amritsar in the 1840s", *Journal of Regional History*, I (1980), 45-48.

69 Mohan Lal, *Travel in Punjab*, 243 & 247.

70 J.D. Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs* (ed H. L. O. Garrett), S. Chand & Co, Delhi 1966 (reprint — first published 1849), 3. See also, A. Gauba, "Amritsar in the 1840s", 47-48.

71 Monan Lal, *Travel in Punjab*, 20 & 240-43.

72 Prices rose in the years of scarcity. In July 1814, for example, in the open market in Lahore city, the selling price of flour was seven seers per rupee and even at that rate, it could be procured with great difficulty. In 1815, in spite of heavy rains, the grain was selling at a very cheap rate in Lahore: Garrett and Chopra, *Events at the Court of Ranjit Singh, 1810-17*, 158-59 & 188.

per rupee for the years 1841-43 was cotton 4, *gur* 14, wheat 30 and barley 42. On the whole, with the exception of the years of glut, prices went on increasing, particularly during the second quarter of the nineteenth century. With the exception of some crops like indigo, whose production was small and demand high, the percentage of change in prices was more in case of the less valuable crops like millets and barley which were consumed by the largest section of population.[73] The presence of the imperial camp or the movement of the armies, on the other hand, perhaps increased the prices of the superior grains. During the Kashmir expedition of 1813-14, in the areas on the Punjab-Kashmir border, for example, the price of wheat rose to 9 seers per rupee which was about three times the normal price.[74]

In fact, the state policy had a deep impact on the standard of cultivation and trade in agricultural produce. In the directly administered areas Ranjit Singh made every possible effort to increase the land under cultivation. Government loans were given for the construction and maintenance of wells and purchase of seeds, implements and bullocks.[75] Cultivators were exempted from the grazing tax as well.[76] The

73 The rising trend in prices is indicated by the following table :

Prices of Principal Articles of Agricultural Produce (in seers per rupee)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Average prices for the years	Cotton (uncleaned)	Sugar unrefined	Rice	Wheat	Mung	Gram	Barley	Millet (*jowar*)
1841-43	4.2	13.5	17	30.2	25.7	35	42	40.5
1844-46	4.2	13.5	16	27.2	25.2	33	38.5	35.6
1847-49	4.3	12.3	15.3	27	24.5	28.7	35.3	31.7

These prices are based on the average of sixteen districts : *PAR 1877-78*, 104-05; *Report on the Census of the Punjab 1881*, 53.

74 *Umdat ut-Tawarikh*, II, 133 & 256.

75 Sita Ram Kohli, "Land Revenue Adm nistration under Maharajah Ranjit Singh", *Journal of the Panjab Historical Society*, VII, No. I (1918), 85.

76 *PAR 1849-51*, 80; Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, 106-07 & nn 72 & 74.

nazims and *kardars* were directed to develop the agricultural resources of their territories to the highest possible level.[77]

Land revenue system of Ranjit Singh was also responsible for the high state of cultivation in the central Punjab. Revenue rates were generally low and were charged according to the crop-bearing capacity of the land. The methods of assessment for the most part were flexible. More than four-fifths of the land revenue of the Lahore Darbar by 1847 was assessed under *batai* and *kankut*.[78] Under these methods the nature of the crop and cultivator's capacity to pay revenues were automatically adjusted. After paying the land revenue and cesses the owner-cultivator enjoyed from 40 to 50 per cent of the gross produce.[79] In the event of natural calamities, abatement in the revenue was given to keep the distress to the minimum, and land in a state of fair cultivation.[80]

The policy of the state to extend cultivation by encouraging the foundation of new villages helped in bringing large areas under cultivation. In the already well cultivated areas, efforts were made to bring the uncultivated pockets of land under cultivation.[81] The peasant proprietors, who had run away from their villages during the period of political turmoil were induced to come back and resettle on their lands. Many of the cattle feeders and inhabitants of grazing tracts were encouraged to settle permanently as cultivators.[82] Leases were also given to the capitalists in Multan to construct wells to bring more area under cultivation.[83] A man constructing a new well in a waste land was often given a part of the area irrigated from

77 Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, 76-77 & n 65; also, 110-12 & nn 91-92. See also, J.M. Douie, *Punjab Settlement Manual*, Civil and Military Gazette Press, Lahore 1909 (2nd ed), 20.

78 *PAR 1849-51*, 83. See also, Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*. 88-92 & nn 2-3 & 5-7.

79 Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, 189 & 193.

80 *Umdat ut-Tawarikh*, II, 350.

81 *SR Ludhiana 1859*, 9.

82 Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, 111-12 & nn.

83 *PAR 1849-51*, 101 & 104.

the well as revenue-free land. The share of the state was pitched especially low in case of new cultivation and was increased only gradually.[84] The *chaudharis* and *muqaddams* also were given revenue-free lands for the purpose of extending cultivation.[85] Maharaja Ranjit Singh, in fact, made all possible efforts to protect cultivators from official oppression and the raids of the marauding tribes living on the borders of his kingdom. Strict instructions were given also to the army not to destroy crops and oppress the peasants.[86]

Ranjit Singh's policy also affected trade in agricultural produce. Moderate custom duties and efficient police administration encouraged and protected trade.[87] Duties charged from the native merchants were lower than those charged from the foreign merchants. At Dera Ghazi Khan, for example, the import duty levied on the native merchants of silk when sold in the city was four annas per seer, while the Afghans paid one rupee.[88] The duties, moreover, varied for all articles and were comparatively low in case of grains.[89]

84 Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, 111 & n 92. See also, J.M. Douie, *Punjab Settlement Manual*, 20-21.

85 Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, 84.

86 *Umdat ut-Tawarikh*, II, 31, 42-43, 227, 243, 263 & 278; Garrett and Chopra, *Events at the Court of Ranjit Singh 1810-17*, 7, 120, 184-85 & 191; *Foreign/Secret Consultation*, 20 April 1840, No. 88 in *Maharaja Kharak Singh June 27, 1839 — November 5, 1840 : Selected Records Preserved in the National Archives of India* (ed Fauja Singh and M.L. Ahluwalia), Punjabi University, Patiala 1977, 112-14.

87 Despite the numerous custom barriers the duties charged were not heavier than those prevailing in the territories of the East India Company. They were charged by a close calculation of the merchants' profits so that they should not be prevented from following the same trade route : N.K. Sinha, *Ranjit Singh*, A. Mukherjee & Co, Calcutta 1975 (reprint), 44; G.L. Chopra, *Panjab as a Sovereign State*, VVRI, Hoshiarpur 1960 (2nd ed), 78. See also, *History of the Punjab and Rise, Progress & Present Condition of the Sect and Nation of the Sikhs* (anon), Punjab Languages Department, Patiala 1970 (reprint — first published 1846), II, 186.

88 Mohan Lal, *Travel in Punjab*, 248.

89 Ibid, 243.

The state itself was a great buyer and seller of agricultural produce. To meet the requirements of a large standing army and other royal establishments revenue collectors were ordered to send grains, pulses, oil-seeds, sugar and other agricultural products. For example, on 15 November 1814, Imam Khan, the *kotwal*, was ordered to send five maunds of linseed oil; a letter, dated 11 January 1817, was sent to a revenue collector to send five hundred maunds of lump sugar to the fort of Kangra.[90] Grain was purchased from dealers at fair prices.[91] It was stored in huge quantities in forts and other government granaries, with the old stocks being cleared and replenished in the open market from time to time.[92] The grain collected by the government in land revenue was sold through the *kardar*.[93] Rise in the prices of grains also increased the income of the government.[94] A part of the land revenue assessed in *batai* or *kankut* was commuted into cash at the rates fixed by the government. According to a standing order of Diwan

90 Garrett and Chopra, *Events at the Court of Ranjit Singh 1810-17*, 151 154, 157, 177, 180-81, 214, 260 & 261.

91 *Khalsa Darbar Parwanas*, Nos. 210 & 214 (seen in typescript, through the courtesy of Dr Indu Banga). They were addressed to Sardar Tej Singh by Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1834. See also, Fauja Singh and M.L. Ahluwalia *Maharaja Kharak Singh*, 59 & 115.

92 For example, on 29 April 1814, Lachchman Singh, the garrison master of Pathankot, was ordered to store up the wheat flour, gram and other grains. In 1816, there were two lakh maunds of rice and other things in the fort of Kangra. On 20 May 1817, letters were despatched to the garrison masters of Gobindgarh, Philaur and Ramgarh to take out the old grain from the fort and to sell it in the open market and store the new grain in its place : Garrett and Chopra, *Events at the Court of Ranjit Singh 1810-17*, 144 & 269; *Umdat ut-Tawarikh*, II, 193. See also, Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, 94-95.

93 Fauja Singh, *Punjab di Sair*, 159.

94 For example, by the middle of the second decade of the nineteenth century, Khalifa Nur-ud-Din, the *faujdar* of Jullundur, sent a sum of three lakhs of rupees as income to Lahore. Sohan Lal expressly says that in the earlier years the income was about one lakh and some thou sand rupees, and that this large sum was obtained now because of the dearness of grains : *Umdat ut-Tawarikh*, II, 142-43.

Sawan Mal, the *kardar* was to send the schedule of rates *(nirkh-nama)* of all grains duly signed by the *panches* and the *zamindars* every season. These rates varied from locality to locality, but were generally slightly higher than those prevalent in the local market.[95]

In conclusion, in the early nineteenth century Punjab, about one-fourth of the total area was under cultivation, and of the cultivated area, between one-sixth and one-fifth was regularly irrigated. Agricultural production varied from the north-east towards the south-west. A meridian beginning from Harike going through the area covered later by the British districts of Lahore, Gujranwala, Jehlam and Peshawar, separated the comparatively highly cultivated and populous region from the sparsely cultivated and thinly populated areas. Irrigated area, similarly, centred in the upper portions of the *doabs* and riverain tracts. Agriculture was dominated by cereals. Double cropping was limited ; a simple system of rotation was followed ; use of manure was limited; and the implements in use were simple and of local manufacture.

The policy of the state was to extend cultivation in the directly administered area through a variety of ways such as government loans for agricultural improvements, generally low rate of revenue, flexible methods of assessment and the colonization of uncultivated lands. The state also encouraged the trade in agricultural produce which was carried on a large scale both at local and long distance level. The prices of articles fluctuated but showed an upward trend. Far from being an isolated and self-sufficient unit, towards the end of Mahararja Ranjit Singh's reign, the village became an integral part of the regional economy, which was linked with the economy in the rest of the country and outside.

95 Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, 95 & n34.

Social Structure In the Upper Bari Doab Towards the End of Sikh Rule

B.S. Hira*

Agriculture, remarked Calvert about the Punjab, was 'the oldest and by far the largest and most important industry'.[1] It provided not only food but also the prime source of wealth. The chief source of revenue in Ranjit Singh's time was land.[2] In the 1850s, more than half of the population of the Punjab was engaged directly or indirectly in agriculture.[3]

In the upper Bari Doab the proportion of agricultural to non-agricultural population was 45.60 per cent. In the Amritsar district, however, the percentage was slightly lower, being 42.13 per cent, and in Gurdaspur district it was slightly higher, being 49.60 per cent.[4] The difference may be partly attributed to the fact that the city of Amritsar had a large non-agricultural population.[5] The upper Bari Doab contributed nearly 17,68,000 rupees to the state treasury in 1850-51.[6]

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1 H. Calvert, *The Wealth and Welfare of the Punjab*, The Civil & Military Gazette Press, Lahore 1920, 4.

2 Sita Ram Kohli, "Land Revenue Administration Under Maharajah Ranjit Singh", VII, No. 1, (1918) : Statement of Annual Receipts & Disbursements.

3 The census figures were 56 per cent : see *Selections from Records of the Government of India* (Foreign Department), No. XI : *Report on the Census of the Population of the Punjab Territories* (hereafter cited as *CR 1855*), 22.

4 *CR 1855*, 22 & 31.

5 Ibid. 23.

6 The figures have been taken from the *General Report on the Administration of the Punjab Proper for the years 1849-50 & 1850-51*, in *Selections from*

The Sikh rulers attached great importance to proprietorship in land.[7] In 1846 an old Sikh bluntly told a British official that 'land tax belonged to the Government but the land to the people'.[8] A number of Persian documents of the Mughal and Sikh times relating to the upper Bari Doab clearly show the existence of individual right of ownership and possession in land.[9] Richard Temple is explicit on this point. From the tenor and tone of public documents it was clear to him that the Sikh rulers did look upon private property as a matter of original abstract right, which was coeval with government and society, and had been recognized by the rulers. Authenticated deeds of sale and other transfers were regarded not as nullities applicable to a system that passed away with the government from which it had sprung, but as instruments of immutable validity.[10]

The existence of proprietary right largely determined the relations of production, or the relations between the various categories of persons contributing in different ways to the process of agriculture. Among the proprietors there were holders of large or small pieces of land. The large holders did not cultivate their lands. The small holders generally cultivated their own lands. Both these categories of proprietors could get their lands cultivated by tenants. There was also another category of persons called *a'ala maliks*, or superior proprietors, who were known by different names from area to area, more

the Records of the Government of India (Foreign Department) No. II. Calcutta Gazette office, Calcutta 1853 (hereafter cited as *PAR 1849-50*), 100.

7 James Douie, *Punjab Settlement Manual*, The Civil & Military Gazette Press, Lahore 1909, 52. See also, H.K. Trevaskis, *The Land of the Five Rivers*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1928, 181-82.

8 R.N. Cust, *Manual for the Guidance of the Revenue Officers in the Punjab*, Lahore 1866, 5.

9 B.N. Goswamy and J. S Grewal, *Mughal and Sikh Rulers and Vaishnavas of Pindori*, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Simla 1969 (hereafter cited as *Pindori Documents*), Documents IV, V & XIV.

10 R. Temple, *Report on the Settlement of the District of Jullundhur*, Lahore 1852, 29.

generally as *zamindars* or *ta'alluqdars*.[11] James Douie has taken due notice of the *ta'alluqdars*:

> In many cases the superior owners are the descendants of persons who once experienced political sway or enjoyed a lordship over the soil, from which they were ousted during the dominion of the Sikhs. though they managed to collect at harvest with greater or less regularity some small proprietary fee, such as a *ser* in every maund of the produce *(sermani)*, from the persons in actual possession of the land. In other cases the connection of the ancestors of the present *talukdars* with the land was in its origin purely official. They were revenue farmers or *jagirdars* who enjoyed under native rule large rights of management, which grew into rights of property. These two sources of *talukdari* right were often united in a single individual.[12]

In the upper Bari Doab the number of *ta'alluqdars* was rather small. During the early years of British rule, there were only eight villages in the *pargana* of Amritsar held by three *ta'alluqdars*. In the *pargana* of Tarn Taran there was only one village, with three *ta'alluqdars*. In the area covered later by the Gurdaspur district, however, there were sixty-one *ta'alluqdars*, holding twenty-three villages. Similarly, in the *pargana* of Saurian in the Amritsar district, there were fifty-two *ta'alluqdars*, holding eighteen villages. In the *parganas* of Batala and Pathankot there were eleven and five villages, respectively with twenty-three and seven *ta'alluqdars*.[13]

The rates of *ta'alluqdari* allowances in the upper Bari Doab, like the number of *ta'alluqdari* villages, were rather low. In Amritsar and Ajnala *tahsils*, where the Rajput owners had been ousted by the Jat, Kamboh and Arain cultivators of land, the

11 In the cis-Satlej tract they were called the *biswadars* and in south-western Punjab, they were known as the *zamindars*: see James Douie, *Punjab Settlement Manual*, 66.

12 Ibid, 70.

13 R.N. Cust, *Statistical Report of the Amritsar Division*, Appendix XV.

former owners were assigned either a small percentage on the revenue or a fixed sum of nominal amount.[14] The rate of *ta'alluqdari* allowances varied from area to area. In the *parganas* of Batala and Amritsar, for instance, it was 3½ per cent of the *jama'*. In Batala 40 maunds of grain were also paid. In the *parganas* of Tarn Taran and Saurian, on the other hand, the rate was about 1.5 per cent of the *jama'*.[15]

The Sikh rulers looked more to the security and development of the revenues. The 'industrious and more frugal races gradually usurped the rights of those whose lands they had originally been content to cultivate'.[16] The Sikh rulers encouraged those cultivators from whom they realized the revenue.[17] The *ta'alluqdars* had no share in the waste. They received their percentage as an acknowledgment of old claims, but only in sixty-six villages of the upper Bari Doab. Thus the *ta'alluqdars* were not important as a class. They were an 'interesting survival' of society that had passed away.[18]

Among the proprietors of land the number of those who cultivated their holdings entirely or mainly by family labour was by far the largest. They could sell, mortgage and transfer their holdings.[19] The great mass of landed property in the upper Bari Doab was held by peasant proprietors. There were nearly 96,000 cultivators of this category, with the average holding of about ten acres. They cultivated nearly 72 per

14 J.A. Grant, *Final Report of the Revision of Settlement (1888-93) of the Amritsar District of the Punjab* (hereafter cited as *SR Amritsar 1888*) Lahore 1893, 62.

15 The allowances have been worked out from R. N. Cust, *Statistical Report of the Amritsar Division*, Appendix XVI.

16 *PAR 1849-50*, 101.

17 R. Temple, *SR Jullundhur 1852*, 27.

18 James Douie, *Punjab Settlement Manual*, 57.

19 Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, 174. See also, B R. Grover, Nature of Land Rights in Mughal India", *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, I, No. 1 (1963), 4.

cent of the total area under cultivation in the upper Bari Doab [20]

In the Gurdaspur district as a whole, there were about 45,000 proprietors who cultivated nearly 3,50,000 acres of land, which came to about 46 per cent of the total cultivated area. The average holding was about eight acres.[21] In the *pargana* of Pathankot, however, over 6,500 proprietors cultivated over 50,000 acres, or 37 per cent of the cultivated area In the *pargana* of Tarn Taran the proprietors cultivated over 77 per cent of the total cultivated area. In the *pargana* of Amritsar they cultivated 72 per cent of the land under cultivation, and the average holding was over thirteen acres. In the upper Bari Doab as a whole, the proprietors paid nearly 14,00,000 rupees a year as revenue.

The *pargana* of Pathankot was dominated by Rajput proprietors.[22] In the *pargana* of Gurdaspur the proprietors were Gujjars, Labanas and some Brahmans as well as Rajputs.[23] In the *pargana* of Batala, however, the number of Rajput proprietors was small. They were concentrated along the river Beas. The more numerous proprietors were Muslim Jats. The important Jat clans were Ghuman, Kahlon and Randhawa. Arains formed a quarter of the proprietors.[24] In the district of Gurdaspur as a whole the Jat proprietors were the most numerous, followed by the Rajputs, Arains and Labanas. In the *pargana* of Amritsar the proprietors were mainly Jats of Randhawa, Sandhu, Bhullar, Gill, Dudwal, Serai, Dhillon and Bajwal clans.[25] In the *pragana* of Saurian, Bhatti Rajputs

20 R.N. Cust, *Statistical Report of the Amritsar Division*. XVIII.

21 The figures have been calculated from R. N. Cust, *Statistical Report of the Amritsar Division*, Appnedix XVIII.

22 *SR Gurdaspur 1854*, 13

23 R.H. Davies, *Report on the Revised Settlement of the Greater Part of the District of Gurdaspur in the Amritsar Division* (formerly known as Batala), Lahore 1859 (hereafter cited as *SR Gurdaspur 1854*), 19.

24 *SR Gurdaspur 1854*, 13.

25 R. H. Davies, *Report of the Umritsur, Sowrian, and Turun Tarun Purgunnah, of the Umritsur Division*, Lahore 1860 (hereafter cited as *SR Amritsar*), *1854*, 21-23.

were the prominent proprietors, followed by Pathans and Jats of the Aulakh clan.[26] In the *pargana* of Tarn Taran the Jats formed 37 per cent of the whole population, and 80 per cent of the land was managed by the Jat proprietors of Dhillon, Sandhu, Gill, Randhawa, Khaira and Kang clans.[27] On the whole, the Jats formed the largest proportion of the proprietors in the upper Bari Doab, followed by the Rajputs as the second largest group.

As already noticed, the proprietors of upper Bari Doab could sell or mortgage their holdings.[28] There was one limitation, however. If any of the proprietors wished to sell his rights, or was obliged to part with them in order to satisfy demands upon him, 'the other members of the same community' had 'preferential right to purchase them at the same price as could be obtained from outsiders'.[29] The outsider who purchased a holding became its full proprietor but he did not get a share in the lands of the village held in common.[30]

Next to the proprietors in sheer numbers were the tenants.

Pargana	Number	Area held	Revenue paid	Percentage of the total cultivated area	Average holding in acres
Pathankot	9141	53701	97988	48.28	5.87
Gurdaspur	15487	83317	134734	33.41	5.37
Batala	15960	83137	169348	38.00	5.20
Saurian	6796	33082	73100	28.60	4.86
Amritsar	8842	71137	112102	25.13	8.04
Tarn Taran	6472	41597	42994	13.46	6.42
Total	62698	365971	630266	39.73	5.83

26 *SR Amritsar 1854*, 31-35.

27 Ibid, 72-102.

28 B.N. Goswamy and J. S. Grewal, *Pindori Documents*, IV, V & XIV.

29 *PAR 1872-73*, 11.

30 Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, 176.

In the upper Bari Doab they were nearly 63,000 and they cultivated about 3,66,000 acres of land. They cultivated nearly 40 per cent of the total cultivated area, with the average holding of six acres. Regarding the position of the tenants in the six *parganas*, as given in the table in the beginning of this paragraph, it is clear that the tenants were more predominant in the Gurdaspur district where they numbered over 40,000 and cultivated more than 2,00,000 acres of land than in the Amritsar district where they were not much more than 20,000 and cultivated less than 1,50,000 acres of land. The average holding in the Amritsar district was larger than in Gurdaspur.[31]

The tenants in the upper Bari Doab belonged to two broad categories : the resident tenants called *asami*, and the non-resident tenants called *paikasht*. The latter could be ejected by the proprietor after any harvest but generally after the *rabi*. The former were divided into *qadimi* and *purana* or, respectively those who had resided in the village for many generations, and those had resided in the village for one or two generations only. The *qadimi* tenant could not be ejected but his holding could be changed. The *purana* tenant could be ejected and his holding also could be changed[32]. Though the proprietor had the 'power and right to evict any tenant', such a right was very seldom exercised.[33] The tenants with long occupancy, that is *qadimi* and *purana*, could cut down trees for agricultural purposes, but they could not sink a well.[34]

Information about the *paikasht* tenants is scanty but interesting. In some villages of the Amritsar district the *paikasht* came from the principality of Kapurthala, particularly in

31 R. N. Cust, *Statistical Report of the Amritsar Division*, App. XVIII.

32 This information is based on the testimony of Lala Shoba Ram, land revenue collector, under the Sikh Government, in the area covered later by the Amritsar Division : see *Papers Relating to Punjab Tenancy Act*, 1870, 87.

33 *Papers Relating to the Punjab Tenancy Act*, 1870, 73 & 77.

34 Ibid, 75, 83 & 87; *SR Gurdaspur 1854*, 88.

favourable seasons.[35] Similarly, in Gurdaspur district, immigrants from the hills cultivated land, reaped the crops and carried their portion of the produce back to their homes.[36] In the Amritsar district a few of the tenants paid in cash and were called *chuha* or contracting tenants.[37]

The rates of *malikana* and the shares in produce differed from area to area. In the Amritsar district the *qadimi* and *purana* tenants paid no *malikana*.[38] In the Gurdaspur district, however, they paid 15 to 24 per cent of the revenue, including *malikana* and other cesses.[39] The tenants were generally paid in grain. The few who paid in cash adopted the method of *kankut* for commutation.[40]

Besides the large landowners, peasant proprietors and tenants in the village, there were hereditary artisans and craftsmen, like blacksmiths *(lohars)*, carpenters *(tarkhans)*, potters *(kumhars)*, weavers *(julahas)*, cobblers *(mochis* and *chamars)* and the oil-pressers *(telis)*.

Altogether the artisans constituted more than 21 per cent of the total population of the upper Bari Doab.[41] They were scattered in towns and villages. As the servants of the village community, they constituted an important part of the agrarian society. The artisans and menials assisted the cultivators in all sorts of agricultural operations. They manufactured agricultural and domestic tools for their clients. Those whose services were required for husbandry or agriculture were generally paid the customary dues, usually consisting of a fixed share of the produce from the fields. The agriculturists who

35 *SR Amritsar 1854*, 72.

36 *SR Gurdaspur 1854*, 92.

37 *Papers Relating to Punjab Tenancy Act*, 1870, 78.

38 *SR Amritsar 1854*, 56.

39 *SR Gurdaspur 1854*, 88.

40 *Papers Relating to the Punjab Tenancy Act*, 1870, 78 & 84.

41 Denzil Charles Jelf Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes*, Punjab Languages Department, Patiala 1970, 28-29, 1970 (reprint — first published 1916), 28-29.

patronized their services were called *jajmans*. The blacksmiths, the carpenters, the potters and the leather-workers held a central place among the artisans.

The functions of the carpenter and the blacksmith were generally performed by the same man. He made handles, plough beams, bodies of stools, yokes, planks and harrows, locks and nails, sharpened the plough shares and sickles and made cots *(charpais)*. Some of them could construct carts and presses. The *chamars* and *mochis* supplied to the villagers shoes, leather whips and blinders for bullocks. The potter supplied earthen buckets, called *tind*, which were used to draw water from the well by the persian wheel. For domestic purposes he used to supply about twenty large and twenty-five small earthen vessels or pots.

The artisans were generally paid at the time of harvest in return for the work done during the preceeding six months. The amount of grain paid for each working plough was usually two sheafs *(bharis)* of each *rabi* cereal, eight seers of rice and maize, and five seers of cotton. In addition, the carpenter received a sheaf for each day when he sharpened the sickles during the reaping of harvest. The potter's share was otherwise equal to the carpenter's. He was paid on wells either at so much per working or at so much for each well. The *chamars* and *mochis* were paid at half the rate.[42]

The *julaha*, the *sunar* and the *teli* were not directly involved in agricultural operations. They were paid either daily wages or by the job. They were however called upon to assist during sowing and reaping seasons for which they were paid separately. The payments to all the artisans who were paid by customary shares were deducted at the threshing ground before making any division between the landlord and the tenant. All these payments absorbed 10 to 15 per cent of the total produce. All these *kamins* during the Sikh period paid a

42 This information is mainly based on the settlement reports of the Amritsar and Gurdaspur districts of the last decade of the nineteenth century.

contribution called *kamiana*.[43] There are references to a few artisans like *tarkhans, lohars* and *kalals* holding proprietary rights in land in the Gurdaspur district.[44]

A large number of craftsmen were employed in the state *karkhanas* at Amritsar. In the other towns also craftsmen were employed by the manufacturers of a variety of articles. Weavers were employed in considerable numbers at Amritsar, Batala and Dera Baba Nanak in the manufacture of cotton, woollen and silk textiles.

There were all grades of merchants and traders in Amritsar and other urban centres. They were generally Khatris, Aroras and Banias. The Khatris and Aroras were enterprising merchants and frugal tradesmen. They were important as financiers and accountants. The Bedis of Wairowal and the Sodhis of Goindwal exported sugar and cotton to Multan in small quantities and in return imported *majith* for the Amritsar and Jullundur markets.[45] The trading class constituted 6.1 per cent of the total population in the upper Bari Doab. The Khatris constituted the largest proportion of the mercantile classes, with 2.74 per cent of the total population. No village could get on without a Khatri who did the banking and bought the grain. The Aroras constituted 1 5 per cent of the total population.[46] The Muslim Khojas, who were mostly hawkers and pedlars, were less than one per cent. The Banias were predominant in the Gurdaspur district, numbering 14,804.[47] and They acted as money-lenders. The rate of interest charged was upto 25 per cent. Many of the bankers and merchants had built three or four storeyed brick houses in Amritsar, the most important commercial city of the Punjab. The *sahukars* of

[43] *SR Amritsar 1854*, 56.

[44] Ibid, 44.

[45] Ibid, 67-68.

[46] D.C.J. Ibbetson, *Panjab Castes*. 28-29.

[47] Ibid, 238-39.

Amritsar were extremely rich.[48] Many *sahukars* were living in Dera Baba Nanak and Batala. The religious classes were represented by Brahmans, Mullas, Jogis, Mahants, Udasis, Bhais and Granthis. Their proportion in the total population of the upper Bari Doab was a little over 6 per cent.

[48] J. S. Grewal and Indu Banga (tr & ed), *Early Nineteenth Century Panjab*. Guru Nanak (Dev) University, Amritsar 1975, 134; D.C.J. Ibbetson, *Panjab Castes*, 216-17.

Agrarian Structure In the Districts of Amritsar and Lahore In the Early Nineteenth Century

Radha Sharma*

The districts of Amritsar and Lahore were the most important central districts of the Punjab in the early nineteenth century; they comprised the most populous areas with 15 per cent of the total population of the Punjab.[1] Of the total agricultural population of the Punjab, nearly 9 per cent belonged to these districts.[2] Those dependent on agriculture formed about 42 per cent of the entire population of these districts.[3] Of the cultivated area of the Punjab, about 17 per cent was

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1 The total population by the end of Sikh rule was 104,35,710 (the figures are relevant for the areas other than the cis-Satlej states) : *Report on the Census Taken on Ist January 1855 of the Population of the Punjab Territories*, Calcutta 1856, 31. The population of Lahore was 7,88,000 : L. S. Saunders, *Report on the Revenue Settlement of the Lahore District 1865-69*, Lahore 1873, 25. The population of Amritsar was 7,61,345 : R. H. Davies and W. Blyth, *Report on the Revised Settlement of Umritsar Sowrain and Turn Taran Purgunnahs of the Umritsur District in the Umritsur Division*, Lahore 1860, 5, 6, 7 & 195.

2 The agriculturist population of the Punjab by the end of Sikh rule was more than 70 lakhs : *Census 1855*, 31. The agriculturist population of the districts of Lahore and Amritsar was around sixty-six thousand or 9 per cent of the total : *SR Lahore 1865-69*, 25; *SR Amritsar 1860*, 5, 6, 7, & 195.

3 The population of both the districts was 15,49,345 and agricultural population of these districts was 6,62,395 : *SR Lahore 1865-69*, 25; *SR Amritsar 1860*, 5,6,7 & 195.

in these two districts and formed about 47 per cent of their total area.[4]

According to the early British administrators, there were three distinct types of tenures existing in this region during the period under consideration : *zamindari*, *pattidari* and *bhaiachara*. A *zamindari* estate was held in full proprietary rights by a single owner. Under *pattidari*, land was divided and held in severalty by the different proprietors according to ancestral and customary shares. Under *bhaiachara* too, the land owner held land in severalty but the measure of individual's right was the actual possession or the portion of the total revenue he paid.[5] From the definitions of these terms, it is evident that all these three categories of tenures implied proprietary rights. The proprietors of *pattidari* and *bhaiachara* villages were by and large self-cultivating proprietors, while the *zamindari* villages were in the possession of large proprietors. By far the largest number of villages were held under *pattidari* and *bhaiachara* tenures. In the district of Amritsar, 1,458 out 1,553 villages, that is, over 93 per cent of the total number of villages, were under these tenures.[6] The predominance of self-cultivating proprietors is thus obvious enough. In the districts of Amritsar and Lahore together, the area held by self-cultivating proprietors was nearly 75 per cent of their entire area.[7] The number or at least the proportion of *zamindari*

4 The entire cultivated area of the Punjab was 99,62,644 out of the total of 4,70,62,492 acres : *Census 1855*, 31. The cultivated area of these districts was 16,93,096 out of the total area of 35,91,146 acres : *SR Lahore 1865-69*, 28-29 ; *SR Amritsar 1860*, 4,6,7 & 142.

5 R.N. Cust, *Statistical Report of the Amritsar Division*, Lahore 1861, par 13-15; *SR Amritsar 1860*, 18, 30 & 54; *SR Lahore 1865-69*, 65-67 ; J. M. Douie, *Punjab Settlement Manual*, *Lahore 1899*, 64; Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, Manohar Publications, New Delhi 1978, 183.

6 *SR Amritsar 1860*, 18, 30 & 54. See also, *Statistical Report*, Appendix XVI—A, par 14.

7 In the district of Lahore the area held by self-cultivating proprietors was 17,03,187 out of the entire cultivated area of 23,19,585 : *SR Lahore*, 28-29 & 35. In Amritsar the number of self-cultivating proprietors was 70,989 with an average holding of 13 acres thus holding 9,22,857 acres of land out

villages in the district of Lahore was larger than in the district of Amritsar.

The proprietors formed about 30 per cent of the agricultural population in these districts and most of them cultivated their own lands. In Amritsar, their proportion was about 35 per cent and in Lahore, 25 per cent.[8] In Lahore, the average holding of a proprietor was 22 acres and in Amritsar, it was 13 acres.[9] The average holding of the proprietors in Lahore district was thus about twice the average holding in Amritsar.

The most numerous among the proprietors in these districts were Jats. They belonged to Gill, Sandhu, Sidhu, Dhillon, Pannu, Bhullar, Dhaliwal, Chahal, Bal, Kang, Cheema, Sara, Aulakhs, Bhangu and Virk clans.[10] The first three appear to have been more numerous than the others. Besides Jats, there were Rajputs, Kambohs, Arains and Pathans who owned land. In the district of Lahore, Kambohs and Arains owned about 6 per cent of the total villages and Muslim Rajputs about 8 per cent.[11] In the *parganas* of Tarn Taran and Narowal-Talwandi of Amritsar district, for which the figures are available, about 82 per cent of the villages were held by Jats, about 7 per cent belonged to Rajputs, and the remaining 11 per cent to others

of the total acreage of 12,71,561 : *Statistical Report*, Appendix XVII, par 14; *SR Amritsar 1860*, 4,6,7 & 142.

8 In Lahore, the number of agriculturists was 3,34,000, and the number of proprietors 76,147 ; *SR Lahore 1865-69*, 28, 29 & 35. In Amtitsar the number of agriculturists was 3,28,395 and the number of proprietors was 70,989 : *SR Amritsar 1868*, 5,6,7 & 195 : *Statistical Report*, Appendix XVII, par 14.

9 The number of proprietors in Lahore was 76,147 and they held 17,03,187 acres of land : *SR Lahore 1865-69*, 35; *Statistical Report*, Appendix XVII, par 14.

10 *SR Lahore 1865-69*, 26; *SR Amritsar 1860*, 16-17, 21-24, 31-35 & 194. See also, J.S. Grewal and Indu Banga, *Early Nineteenth Century Panjab*, Guru Nanak (Dev) University, Amritsar 1975, 28.

11 Kambohs and Arains owned 90 villages and Muhammadan Rajputs owned 118 villages. The total number of villages in Lahore was 1504 : *SR Lahore 1865-69*, 27 & 36.

like Pathans, Dogars, Khatris, Brahmins, Kambohs, Kalals, Gujjars, Lohars, Mullas and Nihangs.[12]

In the district of Amritsar, we come across a group called the *ta'alluqdars*.[13] They were mostly Rajputs who had once enjoyed 'political sway' or 'lordship' of the soil, but were ousted as proprietors by Jats, Kambohs and Arains during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.[14] No longer in possession of land, they were entitled to a share of the revenue paid by the actual possessors and cultivators of land. These *ta'alluqdars* were not much important in the district. The allowance that they were entitled to receive was not more than 2 per cent of the total revenue.[15] There is no evidence of the existence of *ta'alluqdars* in the district of Lahore.[16]

In the early nineteenth century, the *jagirdars* in these districts owed their existence eventually to Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Most of the *jagirs* in the district of Lahore were held by the principal *sardars*. In the three *parganas* of Amritsar district, 33 per cent of the villages were held by the *jagirdars* who received nearly 27 per cent of the revenues of the these *parganas*.[17] Majority of the *jagirdars* were newly created by Maharaja Ranjit Singh. They were mostly Jats, like Shamsher Singh Sandhanwalia, Kahn Singh Atariwala, Karam Singh

12 In the *parganas* of Tarn Taran and Narowal-Talwandi, there were 842 villages out of which 693 were held by the Jats, 62 by the Rajputs, and the rest by others : *SR Amritsar 1860*, 65 & 194-95.

13 The *ta'alluqdari* tenures in Amritsar district existed only in 36 villages out of 1553. The number of *ta'alluqdars* was 81, the largest, which was 52, being in the *pargana* of Saurian : *Statistical Report*, Appendix XVI-A, par 14 & Appendix XVI-B, par 16.

14 J. A. Grant, *Revised Settlement Report of Amritsar 1888-93, 60; Gazetteer of Amritsar District 1914*, 136.

15 Out of the total *jama'* of Rs. 34,311 of Amritsar district, the *ta'alluqdars* were paid Rs. 743 : *Statistical Report*, Appendix XVI-B, par 16.

16 See *SR Lahore 1865-69*.

17 The *jama* of Amritsar, Saurian and Tarn Taran *parganas* of Amritsar district amounted to Rs. 10,59,982, out of which the *jagirdars* appropriated Rs. 2,90,640 and they held 375 villages out of 1,113 villages in these *parganas* : *SR Amritsar 1863*, 4,7,17,27,54,74,75,82,89,94,99 & 103.

Chheena, Lehna Singh Majithia, Gulab Singh Pahuwindia, Hardit Singh Padhania and Arjan Singh Chahal. There were others also like Raja Dhian Singh, Misar Ralia Ram, Sahib Dial, Tej Singh and Raja Dina Nath.[18] Some of the *jagirdars* were the former chiefs or their descendants or dependents, like Buddh Singh Randhawa, formerly a Kanhiya *sardar*, and Lehna Singh Majithia, son of Desa Singh Majithia, a Shergill Jat, formerly in the service of the Bagga *sardars*. Even Fateh Singh Ahulwalia, the ruler of Kapurthala and a vassal of Ranjit Singh, held *jagirs* in the district of Amritsar. In the district of Lahore, the former chiefs or their descendants were Chet Singh Bhangi and Gulab Singh, son of Sahib Singh Bhangi.[19] On the whole, they were less important than the new *jagirdars*.

The tenants in these districts were far less important than the peasant proprietors. On the whole, they did not constitute more than 15 per cent of the agriculturists and they did not cultivate more than 16 per cent of the area under cultivation. In the district of Amritsar they formed 17 per cent of the agricultural population and in the district of Lahore, 15 per cent.[20] The average holding of the tenants in both the districts was almost the same, nearly 6 acres.[21]

The tenants belonged to two broad categories : occupancy tenants and tenants-at-will. These terms were made

18 *SR Amritsar 1860*, 3,13,31,44,45 & 54.

19 Lepel H. Griffin, *The Panjab Chiefs : Historical and Biographical Notes of the Principal Families in the Territories Under the Punjab Government*, Lahore 1865, 215-16 & 393-94; *SR Amritsar 1860*, 3-4, 12 & 44 45; *SR Lahore 1865-69*, 21-22; *Foreign/Political Progs*, 29 December 1849, No. 232. See also, Fakir Syed Waheeduddin, *The Real Ranjit Singh*, Oriental Publishers, New Delhi 1976, 65-66; Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, 61 & 141 n 87.

20 However, the absolute number of tenant cultivators in Lahore was larger than their number in Amritsar, being 51, 715 in Lahore and 27,292 in Amritsar ; *SR Lahore 1865-69*, 35; *Statistical Report*, Appendix XVIII, par 15.

21 The area held by cultivators was 1,73, 858 acres in Amritsar and 3,36 851 acres in Lahore : *Statistical Report*, Appendix XVIII, par 15; *SR Lahore 1865-69*, 35.

current by the British administrators but the types did exist in the early nineteenth century. The extent of land occupied by the occupancy tenants was nearly 33 per cent of the area cultivated by the tenants in these districts, and their proportion to the total number of tenants was 30 per cent.[22]

The occupancy tenants had greater security of tenure. They differed from self-cultivating proprietors practically in the fact that they paid *malikana* to the owners, in addition to the revenue and cesses.[23] In the *pargana* of Tarn Taran, we find that even *malikana* was not claimed from them by the proprietors.[24] In theory, the proprietor had the right of ousting a tenant irrespective of the length of his tenure, whenever he chose to do so, but the right was seldom exercised in actual practice.[25]

Some of the tenants belonged to proprietary class. They cultivated lands belonging to others because their own holdings were rather small.[26] The majority of tenants, however, did not possess any land of their own. We have interesting evidence for the *parganas* of Tarn Taran from this view point. The blacksmiths, carpenters, potters, *kahars* and the *bhishtis*, formed 3 per cent of the total population, and 33 per cent of them were pursuing agriculture. The *chuhras* formed 10 per cent of the total population and 16 per cent of them were cultivators. Besides the Kashmiris, the *sadhs, faqirs, shaikhs, mochis, telis* and weavers constituted one per cent each of the total population, and 23 per cent of them were cultivators.[27]

22 The number of occupancy tenants in Lahore and Amritsar was 1,72,012 and the area with these tenants was 5,10,176 acres : *SR Lahore 1865-69*, 35; *Statistical Report*, Appendix XVIII, par 15.

23 *SR Amritsar 1860*, 56 & 131; *Gazetteer of Amritsar District 183-84*, 29.

24 *SR Amritsar 1860*, 56.

25 *Papers Relating to the Punjab Tenancy Act*, 1870, Appendix VII, 92. See also, Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, 180.

26 J. A. Grant, *Assessment Report of Amritsar Tehsil*, *1892* 15; *Gazetteer of Amritsar District 1914*, 95.

27 *SR Amritsar 1860*, 66.

Indirectly dependent on agriculture were many of the artisans and menials who constituted over 30 per cent of the total population of these districts.[28] They were largely the customary servants of the agriculturists. The system under which they were paid, was known as 'sepi' system.[29] They received a customary share of the produce in return for the services performed by them.[30]

These non-cultivating residents of the village, also known as the *kamins*, generally paid a small cess towards the general fund of the village, called *malba*. This cess was variously known as the *kamiana, chak-atrafi* and *dharat*[31] In Lahore, nearly 13 per cent of the villages paid no such cess. In the rest of the villages *chak-atrafi* was collected. In 72 per cent of the villages *dharat* was also collected.[32] At places, the proceeds of these cesses were claimed by the headman of the village.

On the whole, in the districts of Amritsar and Lahore, land was held predominantly by the self-cultivating proprietors. The *jagirdars* held 33 per cent of the villages, and most of them were the creation of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The tenants formed about 15 per cent of the agriculturists in these two districts. Some Rajputs, who were ousted as owners of land

[28] They were cemposed of *chuhra, chamar, julaha, jhiwar, lohar, tarkhan, kumhar, dhobi and chhimba* castes : D. C J. Ibbetson, *Panjab Castes*, Punjab Languages Department, Patiala 1970 (reprint — first published 1916), 28.

[29] *SR Lahore 1865-69*, 61-62 : Under this system, the artisans shared with the landowners mutual obligations for work and payment. The artisans had fixed duties assigned by tradition and the remuneration determined by local custom, generally a fixed share of the crop : W. H. Wiser, *The Hindu Jajmani System*, Lucknow Publishing House, Lucknow 1936, xxii. See also, Tom G. Kessinger, *Vilyatpur 1848-1968*, Young Asia Publications, New Delhi 1979, 64.

[30] They received about 10 to 15 per cent of the produce : see for example *Punjab Report in Reply to Inquiries Issued by the Famine Commission 1878-79*, I, 444-46; *SR Lahore 1865-69*, 61-62.

[31] *SR Amritsar 1860*, 56; *SR Lahore 1865-69*, 36 This tax is described as *muhtarifa* (a tax on crafts and trade) : J.M. Douie, *Punjab Settlement Manual*, Lahore 1899, 48

[32] *SR Lahore 1865-69*, 36.

by Jats, Kambohs and Arains during the period, were assigned a small share in the produce of land as their *ta'alluqdari* right. The Jats constituted the most important section of the rural population not only because of their preponderance among the cultivators, but also because of their preponderance among the *jagirdars*. Some low caste people, significantly, had started becoming agriculturists, at places with proprietary rights over land.

Artisans in the Punjab Under Maharaja Ranjit Singh

Harish Chander Sharma*

The paper studies the artisans in the Punjab during the early nineteenth century. We do not get sufficient data from contemporary sources on artisans. An attempt has been made in the present paper to reconstruct the condition of artisans on the basis of the information available from the early British records and reports, with particular reference to the area of the central Punjab plains which formed the core dominions of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in which nearly 80 to 85 per cent of the population was living in the countryside.[1]

As the servants of village communities, the artisans constituted an important part of the rural society. According to a rough estimate based on the early British census figures, the artisans formed nearly 20 per cent of the total population in the Punjab during the early nineteenth century. They were most numerous in Jullundur and Hoshiarpur in the Bist-Jullundur Doab; in Amritsar, Gurdaspur and Lahore in the Bari

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1 The proportion of the landowning and agriculturist population in different parts of the core dominions of the Maharaja ranged between 30 to 75 per cent. It was 55 per cent in the upper Rachna Doab and around 55 per cent in the Jullundur Doab : Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, Manohar Publications, New Delhi 1978, 8 n21. Amritsar and Lahore, the two central districts of the Punjab alone, were inhabited by 15 per cent of the total population of the Punjab : Radha Sharma, "Agrarian Structure of Amritsar and Lahore During Early Nineteenth Century", *Maharaja Ranjit Singh and His Times* Amritsar 1980, 169.

Doab; in Gujranwala and Sialkot in the Rachna Doab; in Jehlam and Shahpur in the Chaj Doab and in Multan in the lower Bari Doab. These areas were better cultivated and therefore thickly populated, the agriculturists being numerically and socially predominant in these areas. In all these areas the artisans also constituted more than 25 per cent of the population.[2] The paper, therefore, studies the artisans primarily in the context of the agrarian society and also touches upon their changing conditions during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

The term artisan refers to skilled handicraftsmen who had inherited certain skills and worked in family groups or as individuals mostly in villages, but also in towns and cities. They were generally identified by their castes that largely corresponded to their inherited skills.[3] Important artisans from the point of view of their indispensability to society were the blacksmiths *(lohars)*, carpenters *(tarkhans)*, weavers *(julahas)*, potters *(kumhars)*, leather-workers *(chamars/mochis)* and the goldsmiths *(sunars)*.[4] Because of their functions and economic subservience to landowners in

2 In frontier areas like Bannu and Peshawar, however, the proportions of the artisans were much lower; and were not even one per cent in case of the area covered by the later districts of Dera Ghazi Khan, Dera Ismail Khan, Hazara and Kohat. In these districts agriculture was not so well developed and the cultivators also did not prefer the services of artisans in agricultural operations as most of the work was done by the family members themselves: see D. C. J. Ibbetson. *Report on the Census of the Punjab 1881*, voll. pt 1, Lahore 1882, 384

3 See the author's "Demographic Distribution of Artisan Castes of the Punjab during the Late Nineteenth Century: Some Problems and Prospects". *Proceedings Punjab History Conference, 1978*, 147.

4 Relatively less important artisans were the masons *(rajs)*, dyers *(lilaris/chhimbas)*, oil-pressers *(telis)*, wine distillers *(kalals)*, metal burnishers *(siqligars)* and metal vessel makers *(thathiars)*: D. C. J. Ibbetson, *Panjab Castes*, Punjab Languages Department, Patiala 1970 (reprint - first published 1916), 266-338.

villages the artisans were called *kamins* or menials, and were universally considered socially low.[5]

An average village in the early nineteenth century Punjab depended upon its artisans for its few simple wants, like its household vessels, cloth, sugar, and oil for food and lighting as well as its agricultural implements.[6] The blacksmiths and carpenters manufactured various agricultural implements like the ploughs, yokes, reaping hooks, spades and axes. The potter manufactured the earthen vessels *(tinds)* to be tied round the persian wheel to draw water from wells, while the leather-workers made leather-thongs, whips and blinkers for bullocks driving the persian wheel and sugarcane press. In fact, the artisans assisted the agriculturists in all agricultural operations.[7]

The artisans, in fact, had fixed obligations of service towards agriculturists in return for the remuneration fixed by custom. This arrangement was known as *sepi* system.[8] *Sep* may be termed as a work relationship between the *zamindars*

5 The artisans were treated at par with 'clean' *sudra* of Hindu *varna* system, while the leather-workers were considered as untouchables. Among the artisans themselves, the castes of *sunars, tarkhans, lohars* and *kumhars* were considered superior to the rest of them, while the *julahas,* were regarded as the lowest among the 'clean' castes, The author's, 'Demographic Distribution of Artisan Castes", 150; J.N. Bhattacharya, *Hindu Castes and Sects,* Calcutta 1975 (reprint — first published 1883), 180.

Chamars and *mochis* essentially formed the same caste. In the western Punjab, the Muslim workers in leather were called *mochis,* whereas the *chamars* who mostly concentrated in eastern and central Punjab were largely Hindu : D.C.J. Ibbetson, *Panjab Castes,* 297.

6 See for example, *Report of the Indian Industrial Commission 1916-18* Calcutta 1919, 4-6; also, Vera Anstey. *Economic Development of India,* Longmans Green & Co, London 1948, 35.

7 For a detailed discussion of the services of the artisans in agricultural operations, see the author's, "Artisans in the Punjab (1849-1947) : Occupational Change and New Social Relations", *Journal of Regional History,* I (1980), 109-10.

8 See Leslie S. Saunders, *Report on the Revision of Settlement of Lahore District 1865-69* (hereafter all the references to settlement reports are prefixed with SR and written as *SR Lahore*), 61; W.E. Purser, *SR Montgomery*

or the producers of food and the *kamins* or the suppliers of goods and services, through which they shared mutual obligations for work and payment.[9] Every agriculturist household had a group of *kamins*—the *kamins* of the house — each carrying on his particular craft. The raw materials for new articles were supplied by the owners, but for repair work — the artisans had to provide their own materials.[10]

One of the characteristics of the *sep* system was that it operated without much exchange of cash.[11] The *kamins* were remunerated generally in kind at the time of harvest in return for the work done during the preceding six months.[12] Their dues were fixed according to local customs. In the central Punjab they were remunerated at almost uniform rates, with the *lohars, tarkhans* and *kumhars* receiving the same quantities of grain.[13] It was taken out of the gross produce of the village before making any other payment. Their payment was called *haquq-i-kamiana* or *haq-sep*, which generally absorbed

1878, 29 & 80; Gordon, T. Walker *SR Ludhiana 1878-83*, 52; W. E. Purser, *SR Jullundur 1880 85*, 87; R.H. Davies and W. Blyth, *SR Amritsar 1860-61*, 65-66, *Gazetteer of the Sialkot District 1883-84* (all refrences to district gazetteers issued in 1883-84 are hereafter prefixed with DG and written as *DG Sialkot)*. 57; *DG Shahpur*, 56.

9 The agriculturists who patronised their services were called *jajmans* and the system was also known as the *jajmani* system.

For a discussion of the *jajmani* system see W. H. Wiser, *The Hindu Jajmani System*, Lucknow Publishing House; Lukhnow 1969 (reprint). xxii; also, Tom G. Kessinger, *Vilyatpur 1848-1968 : A Case Study of Social and Economic Change in a North Indian Village*, University of California Press, Berkeley 1974, 56-57.

10 *SR Lahore*. 61-62: *DG Gujrat*, 63; *SR Montgomery*, 29; *DG Sialkot*. 57: *Monograph on Pottery in the Punjab 1891-92*, 13; *Monograph on Iron and Steel Industries in Punjab 1887-88*. 1.

11 W.H. Wiser, *Hindu Jajmani System*, xxii.

12 For the duties and remuneration of artisans as *sepidars* in the Punjab, see the author's "Artisans in the Punjab (1849-1947) : Occupational Change and New Social Relations", JRH, I (1980), 139-11.

13 See *SR Lahore*, 61; *SR Ludhiana*, 52; *SR Jullundur*, 81; *DG Jullundur* 39; *DG Multan*, 81; *DG Sialkot*, 58; *DG Gujrat*, 63.

10 to 15 per cent of the total produce of the village.[14] The artisans not directly involved in agricultural operations, like the *julahas* and the *sunars*, were paid either on daily wage basis or by the job.

The *julahas* and *telis*, however, were called upon to assist during the reaping season and were paid for separately. The *chamars*, *lohars*, *tarkhans*, *mochis* and *kumhars* were hired during both the sowing and reaping seasons to work as field labourers.[15] On social ceremonies like marriages and births in their patron's house, the artisans were expected to perform certain specialised and ceremonial services for which they were entitled to a fee known as the *lag*, and were thus called *lagis* on these occasions.[16] The *chamars*, who were the most numerous among the menial castes, were subjected to work on *begar* or unpaid labour. The *begar* included white-washing the village guest-house, carry the luggage of the visiting officials from one place to another, and bringing fodder for the cattle of the agriculturists from the fields.[17]

During the early nineteenth century, the artisans in villages were subjected to a tax known as *kudhi-kamini* which most probably was a village cess realized by the land-owners from non-agriculturists. This tax was also known as *haq-buha* or

[14] In the mid nineteenth century, the remuneration given to the artisans by the agriculturists in Amritsar was around 13 per cent : *Punjab Report in Reply to Inquiries Issued by the Famine Commission 1878-79*, 444-46. In the areas with extensive cultivation, the share of artisans was about 16 per cent : *Assessment Report of Amritsar Tashil 1892*, 35. See also, Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, 109.

[15] *DG Shahpur*. 39; also the author's "Artisans in the Punjab (1849-1947)" *JRH*. I (1980), 109.

[16] As *lagis* the artisans made briadal seats, tables for worship and vessels for dowry: see Daljinder Singh Johal, "Literary Evidence on Social Structure in the Punjab (1750-1850)", *Journal of Regional History*, I (1980), 59-60; also, Ram Sukh Rao, *Sri Fateh Singh Partap Prabhakar* (ed Joginder Kaur), Ph.D. Thesis, GNDU, Amritsar 1978, ff 65a, 66a, 239a, 240b, 297a, 354a & 356 b.

[17] D.C.J. Ibbetson, *SR Panipat and Karnal Pargana 1872-80*, 116.

door cess. It was also known as *ahtiraf* or *muhtarifa* paid by artisans in villages in which they plied their *hirfa* (trade or profession). This tax was paid towards general fund of the village called *malba*. In Lahore this was called *chak-atrafi* and *dharat*.[18] In Amritsar, this tax was called '*kumini*'.[19] At places it was collected as *sair-dehi* (village-cess).[20] The rate most common in the Punjab was two rupees per-annum, payable in two half yearly instalments by each adult male engaged in his trade. There is some evidence to suggest that this tax formed a part of the income of the state; the responsibility to collect however was of the agriculturists.[21]

In response to certain policies and measures of the state changes in the traditional social and economic relationship between the artisans and the agriculturists were also evident during the period. As a result of the state policy to increase the revenues by increasing the cultivated area, vast stretches of land in the central, north-western and south-western Punjab had been brought under cultivation by the end of Ranjit Singh's reign.[22] An increasing number of artisans were participating in the process of colonization and were becoming agriculturists. There is evidence of the *tarkhans, lohars, kumhars, telis, julahas, kalals* and *mochis* colonising wastelands as tenants or pursuing agriculture along with their traditional occupation.[23] Wherever they had been cultivating strips of

18 *SR Lahore*, 36.

19 *SR Amritar*, 56.

20 "Summary Settlement of Wudni", *Foreign/Political Progs*, 31 Dec 1847, No. 25 par 56 & 58.

21 Ibid, par 56; J. Wilson, *SR Shahpur 1887-94*, 52; D. C. J. Ibbetson, *SR Panipat Tahsil and Karnal Pargana 1872-80*, 108-9. Ibbetson spells the tax as *Kurhi-Kamini*.

22 See Indu Banga, "Social Mobility in the Punjab under Maharaja Ranjit Singh" *Maharaja Ranjit Singh and His Times*, GNDU, Amritsar 1980, 126; also, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, 110-12 & nn.

23 Indu Banga, "Social Mobility in the Punjab", 126.

land for a long time as the servants of the agriculturists, they were treated, 'essentially as proprietors' by the state.[24] In three *parganas* of Amritsar, namely, Amritsar, Saurian and Tarn Taran—for instance, about one-third of the blacksmiths, carpenters and potters, and little over one-fifth of the *mochis* and weavers had become agriculturists during our period.[25] Some *tarkhans, lohars* and *kalals* around Pathankot and Batala had even acquired proprietary rights over land.[26]

The increasing urbanization and growing demand for military and luxury goods by the state and the aristocracy under Maharaja Ranjit Singh, induced the artisans, particularly, the *lohars, tarkhans,* weavers, and gold and silversmiths, to move to towns and cities.

The manufacture of arms and ammunition held important place among the industries during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The state policy was to rely on the indigenous manufacture and to patronise the artisans by paying them well. The blacksmiths of Kotli-Loharan and Nizamabad for example, were paid at the rate of 11 to 12 rupees for a matchlock.[27] Some of the foundries employing large number of artisans were owned by the state.[28] There is evidence to suggest that the

[24] The Sikh rulers were anxious to increase the cultivated area by bringing more and more land under cultivation. They not only gave *taqavi* loans for bringing wasteland under the plough but also charged lenient rates of assessment on wastelands brought under cultivation. Resettlement of peasant proprietors who had run away during political turmoil was also encouraged: Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs,* 110-12 & 181 nn

[25] *SR Amritsar 1860,* 65-66 See also, Radha Sharma, "Social Configuration in three Parganas of Amritsar Under Sikh Rule", Seminar on *Political Change and Socio-Economic Structure During 18th Century India,* GNDU, (seen in typescript); B. S. Hira, "Social Structure in the Upper Bari Doab towards the End of Sikh Rule", *Maharaja Ranjit Singh and His Times,* GNDU, Amritsar 1980, 58-68.

[26] R. H. Davies, *SR Gurdaspur 1859,* 44.

[27] *Khalsa Darbar Parwanas,* No. 404 (seen in typescript through the courtsey of Dr Indu Banga), addressed to S. Tej Singh from camp Daulat Nagar dated 6-7, November 1834.

[28] Fauja Singh, *Military System of the Sikhs,* Motilal Banarsidas, Delhi 1964, 240.

jagirs were also given to skilled craftsmen and artificers during Maharaja Ranjit Singh's time.[29]

The vassals and *jagirdars* of the Maharaja too patronized the manufacture of arms and ammunition.[30] Their establishments however, were on a smaller scale than those of the Maharaja. In addition, numerous arsenal factories owned and run by the artisans themselves were spread all over the kingdom of Lahore. The most important centres of arms manufacture were Kotli-Loharan also known as Kotli-Ahangran, Amritsar, Lahore, Wazirabad and Nizamabad. Gujrat and Sialkot also were known for the manufacture of the articles of iron, and Sahiwal was known for its coppersmiths.[31]

To meet the requirements of aristocracy and largely the urban Punjabis, the artisans were also engaged in producing rich textile fabrics, jewellery and other articles which were well-known for their quality. Chief manufacturing centres were Amritsar, Multan, Shujabad, Sialkot, Gujrat, Hoshiarpur and Lahore.[32] Amritsar was renowned for its *pashmina* shawls,

29 Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, 126.

30 For example, the Dogra Rajas, Jamadar Khushal Singh, Sardars Tej Singh and Lehna Singh Majitha had their own magazine : Fauja Singh, *Military System of the Sikhs*, 241.

In the work-shop *(mistri-khana)* maintained by Fateh Singh Ahluwalia, besides the casting of guns and weapons, high quality articles of wood, iron, steel, gold and other metals were produced. The craftsmen were paid regular salaries : see Joginder Kaur (ed). *Ram Sukh Rao's Fateh Singh Partap Prabhakar*, "Introduction", 156-57.

31 J. S. Grewal and Indu Banga (tr & ed), *Early Nineteenth Century Panjab* (Ganesh Das's *Char Bagh-i-Panjab)*, Guru Nanak (Dev) University, Amritsar 1975, 33; Fauja Singh, *Military System of the Sikhs*, 240.

32 B. H. Baden-Powell, *Hand Book of Economic Products of the Punjab*, Punjab Printing Company, Lahore 1872, 272 & 282. See also, *DG Sialkot*, 129.

The Maharaja particularly promoted the silks of Multan by making it a practice to make presents of silk goods of Multan to his courtiers and visitors. It soon became a fashion among the artistocracy to wear sashes and scarves of Multan : Fakir Syed Waheeduddin, *The Real Ranjit Singh*, Oriental Publishers New Delhi 1976 (reprint), 120.

silk manufactures, wood carving and work on marble and ivory.[33] Ornaments of gold was a speciality of the city of Amritsar. The goldsmiths had various centres in different parts of the city.[34] Multan and Lahore were known for their silks.[35] Multan was known also for its glazed pottery, enamelling on silver, woollen-carpets, silk-printing, and sashes of silks.[36] The weavers of Hoshiarpur, Jullundur and Sialkot made fine *susi* cloth of all varieties and *lachas* and *lungis*.[37] Jhang was known for the quality of coarse cotton goods which it exported.[38] Sialkot was a leading centre of paper manufacturing.[39] The earnings of the producers of the articles of luxury were perhaps much more than those of their counterparts in small towns and villages.[40]

In fact, the socio-economic condition of the artisans plying their traditional trades in the countryside was rather low. The fixed remuneration and other customary payments were meagre and artisans barely subsisted on them. Any upset caused by famines or floods or droughts or epidemics hit them the hardest as they generally did not have the means to tide over these calamities.[41] One of the possibilities to improve

33 *Report on the Administration of the Punjab and its Dependencies for the Year 1868-69*, 110; A. Gauba, "Amritsar in the 1840's", *Journal of Regional History*, I (1980), 46.

34 A. Gauba, "Amritsar in the 1840's", 47.

35 *Punjab Administration Report 1868-69*, 110.

36 *DG Multan*, 87.

37 See J.S. Grewal and Indu Banga, *Early Nineteenth Century Panjab*, 33, 62, 70, 73, 85 & 88; *Report on the Administration of the Punjab and its Dependencies 1861-62*, xxxvi.

38 *Census Punjab 1881*, pt I, 385.

39 *DG Sialkot*, 75; *Punjab Administration Report 1861-62*, xxxvi.

40 Average earnings of weavers, potters, carpenters, goldsmiths ranged between one anna to ten annas a day in towns and cities. In smaller towns and villages their income was much less : see *Monograph on Gold and Silver Works in the Punjab 1888-89*, Lahore 1890, 11-15; *Monograph on Iron and Steel Industries 1906-09*, 1-3.

41 The non-landed classes were generally the first victims of any natural calamity because of their being the poorest and having very sparse sources at

their economic and social position was by changing their lowly paid occupations. The growing demand for their manufactures had improved the economic condition of the artisans working in towns and cities. Their social standing too must have improved. But only a very small number of the artisans producing very fine articles appear to have been able to improve their economic condition and social standing during this period. We may nevertheless, say that changes in occupations which were accelerated during the second half of the century were already evident in the Punjab under Maharaja Ranjit Singh.[42]

their disposal to make a living : see *Report on the Famine Commission of India*, IV, 10, 11 & 358.

42 See the author's, "Artisans of the Punjab (1849-1947)," *JRH*, I (1980), 113-17. See also, P.H.M van den Dungen, "Changes in Status and Occupations During the Second Half of Nineteenth Century" (ed D. A. Low), *Soundings in Modern South Asian History*, Wiedenfeld and Nicoloson, London 1968, 54-95.

Amritsar in the Early Nineteenth Century

Anand Gauba*

Maharaja Ranjit Singh took over Amritsar in 1805.[1] It was then a combination of several autonomous townships called Katras around the core of the old town of Ramdaspur which contained the Harmandir. The Katras established by different chiefs thus formed the outer circuit. Each Katra was walled and had only one gate for entrance. Each Katra had a market place of its own. The residents of a Katra paid ground-rent and a cess called *chaukidari* to the chief. What Ranjit Singh occupied in 1805 was the fort and the Katra of the Bhangis in the south of Harmandir Sahib.

The oldest part of the city, known as Chak Guru or Ramdaspur upto the close of the eighteenth century, was very densely populated. Besides the Harmandir, it was known for its business centres like Guru Bazar and other landmarks like Chaurasti Atari and Toba Bhai Salo. The site of the fort of Lohgarh was on the outskirts of Ramdaspur. Between the old inhabited area and Harmandir Sahib had come up Katra Faizullapuria. The Bhangi quarters occupied a fairly large area, covering Katra Hari Singh with its Bazar Patrangan which joined Guru Bazar, Katra Charhat Singh, Katra Desa Singh and Katra Karam Singh. To the east of Harmandir Sahib was Katra Ramgarhia and the

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1 Some writers, particularly the British, have accepted 1802 as the date of the conquest of Amritsar by Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Sohan Lal Suri gives 1805 : *Umdat ut-Tawarikh* (tr Amarwant Singh, seen in typescript), Daftar II, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 56.

Ramgarh fort. In the north and north-east were Katra Mahan Singh and Katra Ahluwalia, both marked by fortresses. In the north-west was Katra Kanhiyan, a flourishing centre of trade.

Once the city was unified under Maharaja Ranjit Singh, he decided to fortify it with a massive double wall of unbaked bricks, with a double moat. According to Ahmad Shah, this fortification was twenty-five yards broad and seven yards high.[2] The circumference of the walled city was about five miles.[3] There were twelve gates, of which Lahori Darwaza served as the main entrance. Going anti-clock wise, one came upon the other gates : Khazana, Hakiman, Rangar Nanglia, Gilwali, Ramgarhia, Doburji, Ahluwalia, Deorhi Kalan, Ram-Bagh, Deorhi Shahzada and Lohgarh.

The Harmandir, which still formed the nucleus of the city, was beautified with pure white marble and gold, and with fresco paintings. The main entrance to the Harmandir was from the west, between the Akal Takht and Gurdwara Thara Sahib.[4] A large number of stately buildings, called *bungas*, had come up around the Harmandir during the time of Ranjit Singh and his predecessors to serve as rest houses.[5] Bunga Gianian was known for its beautiful building adorned with murals in gatch art, and with *tukri* or mirror work. Bunga Nau Nihal Singh, Malwai Bunga, Bunga Jallianwala and the Ramgarhia Bunga were conspicuous for their height. Ranjit Singh's own *bunga* was located in the north-western corner of the sacred tank.

A number of new Katras and market centres sprang up during the first half of the nineteenth century on the land available between the scattered localities already in existence. In the north of Bunga Nau Nihal Singh and Bunga Gianian sprang up a busi-

2 Gurbakhsh Singh, *Tarikh-i-Panjab* (Punjabi translation of a portion of Ahmad Shah's *Tarikh-i-Hind*), Punjabi University, Patiala 1969, 102.

3 According to Ahmad Shah, the circumference of the wall was 5,100 *karam* (one *karam* being equivalent to 54 to 66 inches) : loc cit

4 W. L. M' Gregor, *History of the Sikhs*, Punjab Languages Department, Patiala 1970 (reprint—first published 1846), I, 235.

5 Gurbakhsh Singh, *Tarikh-i-Panjab*, 38.

ness centre. The Bagichi and Kucha of Rama Nand, a fairly congested locality, formed the centre of this new market. Beyond this complex was the old Santokhsar, the fort and the *dhab*, the *bazar* and the inhabited part of Katra Ahluwalia. To the east of the Harmandir complex, beyond Guru Ka Bagh and Akhara Braham Buta, grew up the *tabela*, the *bazar* and the garden of Himmat Singh, called Katra Jallewalian.[6]

In the south of the Harmandir, beyond Kaulsar and Baba Atal, came up a market, especially for agricultural produce, extending from Chauk Darbar Sahib to Qila Bhangian in the west, and to Dhab Basti Ram in the east. Bazar Paparan and Bazar Bansan emerged from Chauk Darbar Sahib running almost parallel, one in the direction of Qila Bhangian and the other joining Chauk Namak Mandi. The Katra of Dal Singh Naherna, the godson of Fateh Singh Kalianwala, came up, with its Chawal Mandi (rice market), in the south of the Bagh and the Haveli of the Kalianwala Sardar.[7] To the west of it came up the oblong shaped Katra of General Mehtab Singh, with Bazar Paparan as its chief market, adjoining the Katra of Nihal Singh Atariwala with Misri Bazar as its trade centre. To the further west was the Majith Mandi, a market for dyeing stuffs.[8] Mandi Ahan-Faroshan, the market for iron, ran parallel to Majith Mandi and Bagh Jhanda Singh in the west.[9] In the south of Katra Dal Singh was the Katra of General Mit Singh, known for its Kanak Mandi, the market for grains.

At the back of the Akal Takht was Bazar Kathian, linking Bazar Mai Sewan in the north with Chauk Darbar Sahib in the south; it was known for saddlery. Between Bazar Kathian and Guru Bazar, Katra Harsa Singh and Katra Mohr Singh were

6 Map of Amritsar 1859, Sheet No. 9-11 (available in the office of Darogha Nazool, Amritsar).

7 This garden is mentioned by Ganesh Das among the chief gardens of the city : J.S. Grewal and Indu Banga. *Early Nineteenth Century Panjab* (translation of a portion of Ganesh Das's *Char Bagh-i-Panjab*, Guru Nanak (Dev) University, Amritsar 1975.

8 Ibid, 133-34.

9 Ali-ud-din. *Ibratnama*, MS, SHR 1277, Khalsa College, Amritsar.

coming up on the ruins of Katra Faizullapuria. These Katras, though residential, were used more for commercial purposes. Bazar Kaserian was an important market for metal work. Guru Bazar had its opening towards the Harmandir at a point called Darshani Deohri.

Between the fort area and Katra Dulu sprang up the Katra of Bhai Sant Singh, known also as Katra Bhaian. On the space between Katra Dulu and Guru Bazar grew up the Katra of Jamadar Khushal Singh. From Lahori Gate to Darwaza Gilwali, the extreme south of the city was developed entirely during the time of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. There were four Katras in the area : Katra Khazana; Katra Hakiman, founded by the Faqir brothers; Katra Rangar Nanglian, also called Katra Karam Singh; and Katra Garbha Singh, named after the general of Ranjit Singh who laid his life in the battle of Naushehra in 1823, with Bazar Garbha Singh and Bazar Kamboan. The Katra of Dhanna Singh Malwai came up between Darwaza Ramgarhia and Darwaza Doburji. Most of the Udasi *akharas* were situated there. The *chhauni* (cantonment) and *shamlat* (common land) of the Nihangs was also located there. Between the Deorhi Kalan and Ram Bagh gates came up Katra Jaimal Singh. Between the Ram Bagh and the Deorhi Shahzada gates another Katra sprang up after the name of Prince Sher Singh. The land to the south of Katra Sher Singh, upto Lohgarh Gate, developed as a residential area during the time of Ranjit Singh consisting of the Katra of Misar Beli Ram, the *toshakhania,* and the Katra of Moti Ram. Much of the empty space within the wall was thus filled up during the time of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Still, there were numerous *dhabs* and gardens within the wall.

Outside the city wall the most solid structure was that of the fort of Gobindgarh, to the west of Darwaza Lohgarh, about a fourth of a mile away from the city. It had a treble line of defence and a deep moat around the outer wall which was nearly 1,000 metres in perimeter. The fort was built in 1809 by Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The batteries rising one

above the other gave it a very imposing appearance.[10] There were two main gates, called Darwaza-i-Ali, on the western and eastern sides, with five heavey guns fixed on each.[11] The wall of the fort had numerous bastions, with guns fixed for the gunners to fire if required. The treasury of Maharaja Ranjit Singh was kept in Gobindgarh.[12]

The palace of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, known as Ram Bagh, was in the north of the city at a distance of about 1/4 mile from Darwaza Ram Bagh.[13] A garden was laid out by 1819 and was enclosed by a masonary wall about fourteen feet high with ramparts and a gate capable of carrying guns.[14] Outside the wall was a moat filled with water from the Hasli canal. The palace was connected with the city through the Ram Bagh Gate. At each of the corners of the garden was built a small ornamental *burji* or kiosk. In the centre of the garden was a double storeyed palace with a basement (*tahkhana*) to serve as a cool underground chamber. The garden had a double row of fountains in the east-west direction upto the central palace.

The example of Maharaja Ranjit Singh was followed by the nobility consisting of the vassal chiefs, generals and civil administrators. The north side of Amritsar became studded with garden houses of the nobility.[15] In the north of Ram Bagh palace, the vassal chiefs like Raja Dhian Singh, Hira Singh, Suchet Singh and the Raja of Punchh built their garden houses. On the road to Fatehgarh was located the garden of

10 Baron Charles Hugel, *Travels in Kashmir and the Punjab*, Punjab Languages Department, Patiala 1970 (reprint — first published 1845), 390.

11 H.L.O. Garrett (tr & ed), *The Punjab Hundred Year Ago* (As described by V. Jacquemont and A. Soltykoff), Punjab Languages Department, Patiala 1971 (reprint, cited hereafter as Jacquemont, *The Punjab Hundred Years Ago*), 29.

12 Hugel, *Travels in Kashmir and the Punjab*, 390; Ali-ud-din, *Ibratnama*, 84.

13 Jaquemont, *The Punjab Hundred Years Ago*, 27.

14 *Amritsar District Gazetteer 1892*, 158.

15 The information about the gardens is mostly collected from the Jamabandi recores of Amritsar Khas, Hadbast 386, 1852.

Jiwan Singh Mann. In the west of the Ram Bagh palace was the garden of Shaikh Imam-ud-din. In the further west was the garden of Misar Megh Raj, son of Misar Diwan Chand. In its south was the garden of Ranjodh Singh, the Majithia *sardar* ; and in its further south was the Kishan Bagh, perhaps belonging to Kishan Das, one of the *chaudharis* of Amritsar in the 1840s.[16] Between the roads to Fatehgarh and Sialkot was the garden of Raja Tej Singh, the nephew of Jamadar Khushal Singh. To its south was the garden of Sahib Dial, son of Misar Ralia Ram Chungiwala. Beyond Sialkot Road was the garden of Jamadar Khushal Singh. In its south was the garden of Lehna Singh Majithia, the governer of the Majha tract. Between the roads to Batala and Majitha was a huge garden called Bagh Sheesh Mahalwala. In the south-east of the Ram Bagh palace were a number of gardens like, Bagh Hari Singh Nalwa, Bagh Raja Tej Singh, Bagh Lehna Singh Majithia, Bagh Jawala Singh Padhania and Bagichi Misar Ralia Ram. Between the Rambagh palace and the city wall was the garden of Misar Beli Ram, the *toshakhania*. In the south of the city there was only one garden, that of Dhanna Singh Malwai. Some of the rich merchants of the city also had their gardens outside the city wall.

Apart from the Gobindgarh fort and the Ram Bagh palace, there were some religious structures outside the wall. In the west, around the Durgiana tank, there was a complex of Vaishnava, Shaiva and Shakta temples. A lofty structure, called Kotha Dussehra, was built for royal use to view the Dussehra festival.[17] Outside the Ram Bagh gate there was a concentration of Muslim buildings of religious character. A number to *takias* and *khanqahs* were located around the wall.[18] There were numerous *dhabs* outside the wall. The one close

16 *Foreign/Political Consultations*, 11 January 1850.

17 V. S. Suri, *Umdat ut-Tawarikh* (English translation of Sohan Lal Suri's *Umdat ut-Tawarikh)*, Punjab Itihas Prakashan, Chandigarh 1972, 204-05, 213, 234, 244, 246, 250, 283, 297 & 304.

18 W. L. M'Gregor, *History of the Sikhs*, I, 19.

to the Gobindgarh fort was called Moti Jheel. The *dhab* near the Ram Bagh palace was virtually a lake which could be crossed by a boat to reach the palace.

The city of Amritsar served as the second capital of the kingdom of Lahore during the time of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. It was placed under the charge of the governor of the Majha tract.[19] This position was held first by Desa Singh and then by Lehna Singh Majithia.[20] He was probably responsible for maintaining law and order in the city.[21] He enforced regulations regarding the sale of meat and liquor and prohibited the entry of armed soldiers in the city.[22] Possibly he was responsible for the efficient administration of the customs department.[23] Beyond that his connection with the city administration is not clear.

The fort of Gobindgarh was placed under a garrison master *(qiladar)*.[24] So far as the city administration was concerned, it appears that the *kardar* was mainly responsible for the collection of various taxes, possibly under the direction of the governor.[25] Alternativaly, the collection of custom duties was given in *ijara*.[26] The family of Misar Chhajju and his son Ralia Ram came to be known as *chungiwalas* probably for having held the *ijara* rather frequently or for a long time.[27] In the

19 *Lahore Political Diaries 1847-48*, III, Punjab Government Records, 12 January 1847, 5.

20 Shahamat Ali, *The Sikhs and Afghans*, Punjab Languages Department Patiala 1970 (reprint — first published 1847), 22; Hugel, *Travels in Kashmir and the Punjab*, 389; L. H. Griffin & Charles Francis Massy, *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab*, Lahore 1909, 419.

21 V. S. Suri (tr & ed), *Umdat ut-Tawarikh*, III, 400; *Lahore Political Diaries 1847-48*, III, 76.

22 *Lahore Political Diaries 1847-48*, III, 20 & 125.

23 Ibid, 81.

24 Ali-ud-din, *Ibratnama*, 84.

25 V. S. Suri (tr & ed), *Umdat ut-Tawarikh*, III, 211 & 326.

26 Griffin and Massy, *Chiefs and Families of Note*, 454.

27 Ali-ud-din, *Ibratnama*, 90.

1840s, a *naib adalati* is known to have been posted in Amritsar for administering justice. Baba Lakshman Singh was the Naib Adalati in 1848. It is not clear whether or not his jurisdiction was confined to the city of Amritsar.[28] The duties of all these officials do not seem to have been clearly specified or distinctly demarcated. None of them seems to have been concerned with the city alone.[29]

The officials of the government were assisted in the administration of the city by *chaudharis* and *punches*. At the beginning of 1850 some of the *chaudharis* to find mention in official records were Takhat Mal, Krishan Das, Narsingh Das, Tek Chand Khanna, Shiv Nath and Hardial.[30] Besides these, Ganesh Das has mentioned Shanker Das and Samadjoo Kashmari. In all probability they were not newly elected or appointed. They administered justice in minor disputes, besides helping the officials.[31] The tax which the non-proprietors paid for the use of ground for residential or business purposes to either the government or the individual proprietor was called *tehzamini* or *haqq-i-dharat,* that is, ground-rent.[32]

In the 1830s, Jacquemont estimated the population of Amritsar at one to two lakhs.[33] Thornton in 1844 estimated its population at 1,20,000 when the camp and the court of Ranjit Singh were there.[34] Large number of pilgrims used to visit the city every *amavasya,* and on Diwali and Baisakhi.[35] The number of traders

28 *Lahore Political Diaries 1847-48*, III, 314.

29 V. S. Suri (tr & ed), *Umdat ut-Tawarikh* III, 213, 216, 243, 247, 400, 412 & 585.

30 *Foreign/Political Consultation*, 16 January 1850, No. 25.

31 *Lahore Political Diaries 1847-48*, III, 314.

32 *Report on Local Improvements in the Administration of the Punjab 1863-64*, Appendix xix; *Amritsar District Gazetteer 1892*, 125.

33 Jacquemont, *The Punjab Hundred Year Ago*, 26.

34 Edward Thornton, *A Gazetteer of the Countries adjascent to India on the North-West including Sind, Afghanistan, Balauchistan, Punjab*, I, London 1844) (cited hereafter as Thornton, *A Gzetteer*), 55.

35 J. S. Grewal and Indu Banga· *Early Nineteenth Century Panjab*, 133.

visiting the city was not inconsiderable.[36] The percentage of male population was higher than that of the females.[37] Nevertheless, it can be safely presumed that the permanent population of Amritsar in the 1840s was over one lakh.

In terms of religious affiliation, the proportion of Muslims was pretty large. Their number can be estimated at more than 40,000. This was largely due to the influx of Kashmiris in the 1830s in search of occupation. They formed about half of the Muslim population of Amritsar. Muslim traders could be found settled in the heart of the city, as in Bazar Shaikhan adjoining Guru Bazar. The Muslims had their residential localities also in old Ramdaspur, as in Kucha Qazian, Kucha Ragian and Kucha Rababian. But Muslims in general had mostly settled in the outermost quarters of the city, close to the wall, as in Katra Khazana, Katra Hakiman, Katra Karam Singh and Katra Garbha Singh. The Hindus and Sikhs, who together constituted more than half the population of Amritsar, were mostly the older inhabitants of the place. Their localities clustered around the nucleus in the old Ramdaspur area.

In social terms, the trading communities of Amritsar were next in importance only to the members of the ruling class, the *sadars* and courtiers who had made Amritsar their home or second home, built impressive *havelis* and developed *katras* of their own. In economic terms, the traders and shopkeepers were the most important section of the society. Most of the *kuchas* and lanes and some *katras*, like Katra Parja, were founded by them around the nucleus and the markets. Khatris, Aroras, Banias, Afghans and Kashmiris formed the chief trading communities. The eminent persons of the city were in general rich merchants and many of them acted as *panches* and *chaudharis* of the city. Takhat Mal, Kishan Das Arora, Lal Chand Chopra and Shanker Das Bania are mentioned by Ganesh Das as the rich traders and influential

36 Thornton, *Gazetteer*, 1, 55.

37 R.H. Davies and W. Blyth, *Report on the Revised Settlement of Umritsur, Sowrian and Taran Tarun Purgunnah of Umritsar District in Umritsar Division* Lahore 1860, 14.

persons of the city.[38] Rama Nand Sahukar, Narsing Das and Harsukh Dial Bania too were among the influential persons of the city.[39] Samadjoo Kashmiri was honoured in the royal court.[40]

The religious groups among the Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims were fairly well represented in the city. The Brahmans enjoyed the age old importance in the domestic rituals and were the traditional guardians of education. There were 19 schools run by Hindu teachers and all of them were Brahmans.[41] A good number of them held lands either as proprietors or as grantees enjoying the status of courtiers, scholars and priests. However, the custodians of temples were not all Brahmans. Gaura Gwaka, the priest of the Sheetla temple was not a Brahman by caste; nor were the priests of Durga Shivala in Katra Mohar Singh. A number of Bairagis, Sannyasis, Jogis and Gosains enjoyed *dharmarth* grants and had their own establishments.[42] The custodians of Sikh shrines received lavish patronage from the Sikh rulers. Bhais among the Sikhs dominated religious education in the *dharmsalas*.[43] Udasi and Nirmala Sadhs received grantsf or their *akharas* and *dharmsalas*. Among the Muslims, Sayyids and Shaikhs, Faqirs and Pirs, belonging to various castes, were the guardians of religious establishments like *takias*, *khanqahs* and mosques where religious education was imparted. Many such persons held lands either as proprietors or as grantees. Rawals were connected with education of a secular type.[44]

38 J.S. Grewal and Indu Banga, *Early Nineteenth Century Panjab*, 133-44.

39 H L.O. Garrett and G.L. Chopra (tr & ed), *Events at the Court of Ranjit Singh 1810-17*, Punjab Languages Department, Patiala 1970 (reprint) 31-32, 47, 60, 77, 95, 141, 163, 173, 177, 183, 207, & 250.

40 V S. Suri (tr & ed), *Umdat ut-Tawarikh*, III, 14, 31, 48, 75, 79, 171, 177, 188, 401 & 513.

41 A. Gauba, "Education in Amritsar Under Sikh Rule", *The Punjab Past and Present*, Vol IX (1975), 427 & 435-40.

42 Jamabandi P852, Hadbast 386, Amritsar Khas.

43 Loc cit

44 A Gauba, "Education in Amritsar Under Sikh Rule", 428-29.

The artisans were more numerous than the agriculturists. However, the agriculturists were economically stronger. A good number of them were Jats, Arains and Kamhos; they cultivated their own land.[45] The localities of carpenters, blacksmiths, potters and cobblers could be found in the interior of the city at many places, as also on the periphery. All the manufactures of Amritsar depended obviously on its artisans and craftsmen. From the location of their quarters it can be safely concluded that *kharasis, thathiars, sirkibands,* weavers, tanners, goldsmiths, oil extractors, barbers, *chikendoz* and dyers were not unimportant. The Kashmiris specialized in shawls and wool-dying; the Ramgarhia Sikhs were mostly carpenters; and Muslim weavers specialized in silk weaving. Prostitutes attracted the notice of visitors. A large number of them lived in Bazar Kanjrian and Bazar Mughalan.[46] It may be added that there is no evidence of the existence of slave trade in Amritsar.

Religion and politics accounted for only a part of the life in the city of Amritsar. It developed as the most important centre of manufacture and trade in the Punjab. The items of manufacture were meant mostly to satisfy the needs of the higher strata of the society though coarse cloth was also an important item of manufacture.[47] Fine pashmina shawls were exported to Europe in large quantities.[48] Ivory, wood carving and marble cutting were also the well known crafts of the city. Metal work held a high rank. Sardar Lehna Singh Majithia's interest in the manufacture of guns was gratified in Amritsar.[49] Ranjit Singh had his mint in the city. Utensils were prepared in Bazar Kaserian and Bazar Thatherian. Altogether, in 1849-50, the manufactures of Amritsar were

45 Jamabandi 1852, Hadbast 386, Amritsar Khas.

46 Jacquemont, *The Punjab Hundred Years Ago*, 27-90.

47 Thornton *Gazetteer*, 55; *Punjab Administration Report (1854-55)*, par. 87.

48 Hugel, *Travels in Kashmir and the Punjab*, 390.

49 Ibid, 396.

valued at nearly 7,00,000 rupees, while the manufactures of Lahore were valued at less than 2,50,000 rupees.[50]

Pashmina shawl industry topped the manufactures. Other woollens were also manufactured. The shawl industry seems to have started in the city in the 1830s when Amritsar manufactured shawls worth 30,000 rupees, though it imported from Kashmir shawls worth 2,00,000 rupees. The value of manufactures rose to 4,00,000 rupees in the 1840s, though import also rose to 6,00,000 rupees. There were about 2,000 new shops for shawl trade and manufacture, while in the 1830s, there had been only 30.[51] Pasham was imported from Tibet. Goat's wool from Bokhara, called Un-Kirmani, was often mixed with *pashm*. However, shawls were made entirely of Kirmani wool in imitation of the *pashmina* fabrics of Kashmir.[5] A good quantity of coarse woollen cloth, dyed scarlet, was also manufactured to be exported to other parts of India and for local use in winters.[53] For the army of the Maharaja a thick woollen cloth known as *patti*, called 'serge' by Jacquemont, was also made.[54]

Amritsar was the leading centre of silk dyeing and manufacture. Bazar Patrangan was known for silk dyeing. In the 1840s about 900 weavers and 735 winders were engaged in silk manufacture.[55] Bokhara silk was very popular for weaving in Amritsar.[56] Khatris acted as the capitalists ; they purchased silk and, through their brokers (*dalals*), sent it to weavers who worked on piece wages.

50 *Foreign/Political Consultation*, 29 December 1852, No. 144.

51 *Amritsar District Gazetteer 1883-84*, 39-40.

52 Thornton, *Gazetteer*, I, 55.

53 *Monograph on Woollen Manufactures of the Punjab 1885*, par 48.

54 Jacquemont, *The Punjab a Hundared Years Ago*, 29.

55 Henry Cope, "Trade and Manufacture of Silk in the Punjab", *Journal of Agri-Horticulture Society*, Vol X, pt ii (1858), 57.

56 B.H. Baden-Powell, *Handook of the Manufactures and Arts of the Punjab* forming Vol II to the *Hand Book of the Economic Products of the Punjab*, Lahore 1872, 62.

Gold and silver work in the form of kandla (tinsel and wire drawing) and *tilla* was flourishing.[57] Gold and silver leafing work attracted the eyes of all the visitors who greatly appreciated it.[58] Sunar, always Hindu, and Zargar, mostly Muslim, had their centres in the interior of the city, and so had *tilakars* and *kandlakars*. Ornaments of gold were skillfully designed by the Amritsar Sunars.[59] Copper work, particularly Samovars, which were manufactured for Kashmir, and brass work, was the monopoly of the immigrants from the North West.[60]

Merchants of British India, Afghanistan, Persia and Central Asia Tibet and China and Europe had contacts with Amritsar. Foreigners were fascinated by the long *bazars* and the veriety of wares in the city.[61] Several categories of goods were brought to Amritsar to be re-exported to other parts of India and the world. Wheat, rice, cotton, sugar, poppy, indigo, saltpetre, hides and skins, salt and shawls were the chief items of export. The chief imports were gold, silver, iron, silk, leather, furs, wool, piece goods, ivory, glass, spices, dry fruits, dyes and horses. Much of the trade was in the hands of Khatris and Marwari Banias, Pathans and Kashmiris. Rama Nand Bania and Samadjoo Kashmiri were enormously rich. Trade was done mostly by land but water-ways were also used. The octroi collected in Amritsar formed nearly one-third of the octroi of the entire kingdom of Lahore.[62]

We can see in retrospect that Maharaja Ranjit Singh unified the autonomous Katras of the city of Amritsar into a single whole and gave it uniform administration with the help of

57 *Amritsar Municipal Committee Progs*, 19 February 1873, Res No. 1283 (seen in typescript).

58 Hugel, *Travels in Kashmir and the Punjab*, 395-96; *Amritsar District Gazetteer 1883-84*, 42-43.

59 B.H. Baden-Powell, *Hand Book of the Manufactures and Arts of the Punjab*, 189.

60 *Monograph on Brass and Copper in the Punjab 1886-87* Statistics.

61 Thornton, *Gazetteer*, Vol I, 55.

62 *Punjab Administration Report (1854-55)*, para 88.

his officials and the *panches* of the city. The population of the city began to rise, and trade and industry now flourished more than in the late eighteenth century. Already the most important centre of Sikh pilgrimage, Amritsar became the premier city of the Punjab under Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

Rajniti Budhi-baridh : An Articulation of Political Ideas

Surjit Singh Hans*

This paper is based on a cursory reading of *Rajniti Budhi-baridh* (MSS Hin. D. 13 a) in the India Office Library, London. According to the *Catalogue of the Panjabi and Sindhi Manuscripts in the India Office Library* (1977), the work has been published by Prem Singh, Nabhin, 1905. Unfortunately I am not sure if the printed edition can be had in the country. It is putatively a translation by Budh Singh of Amritsar of the Persian classic the *Anvar-i-Suhali* by Mulla Hussain as 'Ali al-Vaiz al-Kashifi'. The manuscript was prepared for Maharaja Ranjit Singh.[1] It is written in Braj verse in the form of animal fables, mostly. Of course, a comparison with the Persian classic would yield subtler understanding of politics under the Sikhs, for which I have no competence.

The purpose of writing this work is firstly to seek patronage from the Maharaja. Secondly, it proposes to help the up and coming courtiers. 'A king needs to be glorified. Some of the potentates have died without being celebrated by the poets.

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1 M.S. Hin. D. 13a, ff 357 :

ਇਤਿ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਬੁਧਿ ਬਾਰਿਧ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿ ਗ੍ਰੰਥੇ
ਸ੍ਰੀ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨ੍ਰਿਪੇਸ ਵਿਰਚਤੇ
ਕਵਿ ਬੁਧ ਸਿੰਘ

A king is the fountain of glory when he extends his patronage'.[2] The same is obligatory on the courtiers.[3] *Rajniti Budhi-baridh* sets out to teach him the ways of the court, which should lead to royal favours.[4] Both the king and the courtier are enjoined to employ men who have the 'wisdom' of wealth and initiative to rule.[5] 'There is no point in having a secret ambition. He

[2] *Rajniti Budhi-baridh*, 357 & 63:

ਜਸ ਕੋ ਉਦੈ ਭਯੋ ਜਿਹਿ ਭਾਨਾ
ਕੇਤੇ ਭਏ ਜਗਤ ਮਹਿ ਰਾਇ
ਬਿਨਾ ਕੀਰਤਿ ਮਰੇ ਅਜਾਇ
ਜਸੁ ਹੀ ਭੂਖਨਿ ਭੂਪਨਿ ਕਹਾ
ਕਵਿਵਰ ਸਭ ਹੀ ਤਾ ਹਿਤੁ ਗਹਾ
ਦਾਨ ਮਾਨ ਜੇ ਦੇਵਨਹਾਰਾ
ਤੇ ਨ੍ਰਿਪ ਸੋਭਾ ਕੇ ਭੰਡਾਰਾ
ਸ੍ਰੀ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨ੍ਰਿਪਨਾਥਾ
ਪਸਰੀ ਜਸੁ ਲਤਿਕਾ ਗਿਹਾ ਗਾਥਾ

ibid, 63:

ਤਾ ਹਿਤ ਪੋਥੀ ਰਚੀ ਸਵਾਰਿ
ਅਕਲ ਅਦਲ ਕੇ ਭਰਯੋ ਭੰਡਾਰ

[3] Ibid, 120:

ਨਿਜਦੀਕੀ ਪਤਿਸਾਹ ਕੇ
ਕਰ ਬਾਰ ਕੇ ਮਾਹਿ
ਤਿਨ ਕੋ ਆਦਰੁ ਦੇਖਿ ਤੂੰ
ਜਗਤਿ ਨਨੈਕ ਸਿਰਾਹਿ

[4] Ibid, 357:

ਜੋ ਜੋ ਯਾ ਕੋ ਬਚਿ ਹੈ
ਹਿਤ ਚਿਤ ਨਿਤ ਕੈ ਨੇਹੁ
ਰਾਜਸਤਾ ਕੀ ਬਿਧਿ ਲਹੈ
ਨ੍ਰਿਪ ਬਰਿ ਕਰਿ ਹੈ ਤੇਹੁ

[5] Ibid, 17:

ਮੁਲਕ ਮਾਲ ਕੀ ਅਕਲ ਜਿਹਿ
ਹਿੰਮਤ ਮਾਹਿ ਬਲਿੰਦ
ਤਾਂ ਕੋ ਲਹਿ ਨਿਜ ਢਿਗ ਭਲੇ
ਰਾਖੇ ਦਾਨਸ਼ਵੰਦ

who wants to be a man of rank should seek nearness to the king[6].'

The author maps out the way to greatness. 'Greatness never comes instantaneously. Rank is had by laudatory services to the king.'[7] One should work in fear of the potentate and yet try to know his nature. He can extend many kinds of bounties on being impressed the way one covers things.[8] One should try to be lucky in one's dress.[9] The secret of achieving rank lies in courageous initiatives. But for this one is reduced to abjectness.[10] One ought to be 'thoughtful' in one's endeavours.[11] A rising courtier should be unstinting in his

6 *Rajniti Budhi-baridh*, 54.

ਲਲਚੇ ਲੁਕਮੇ ਲਾਭਿ ਕੇ
ਨਾ ਵਹਿ ਦਿਲ ਦਾਨਾਇ
ਮਨਸਬੁ ਰਹੈ ਬਲੰਦ ਜੋ
ਸਹਿ ਨਿਜਦੀਕੀ ਪਾਇ

7 Ibid, 59.

ਹੋਇ ਨਹੀਂ ਯਕਬਾਰਗੀ
ਮਿਲਨੇ ਜੋ ਪਤਿਸਾਹ
ਅਧਿਕ ਮਰਾਤਬ ਲਹਤਿ ਹੈ
ਸੇਵਾ ਕਰਤ ਸਰਾਹਿ

8 Ibid. 63.

ਭੋ ਮਲੂਕ ਮਾਲਕ ਮੁਲਕ
ਲਹੈ ਹਕੀਕਤ ਤਾਸ
ਬਖਸੇ ਬਹੁ ਬਿਧਿ ਕੀ ਬਖਸਿ
ਖ਼ੁਸਿ ਹ੍ਵੈ ਦੇਖਿ ਲਿਬਾਸ

9 Ibid, 100 :

ਰਹੈ ਰਾਜ ਦਰਬਾਰ ਮਹਿ
ਪਹਿਰੈ ਨੇਕ ਪੁਸ਼ਾਕ

10 Ibid. 55 :

ਮਰਦ ਮਹਾਨ ਮਰਾਤਬਾ
ਪਾਵਤ ਹਿੰਮਤਿ ਸਾਥਿ
ਬਿਨੁ ਮਰਦੀ ਦਰਦੀ ਬਹੁਤੁ
ਪਛੁਤਾਵਤ ਮਲਿ ਹਾਥਿ

11 Ibid, 129 :

ਫਿਕਰ ਬਿਨਾ ਜੋ ਕਰਤ ਕਛੁ
ਪਛੁਤਾਵੈ ਬਹੁ ਬਾਰਿ

efforts to the point of death in the service of his royal master.[12] Valour leads to royal favours; whoever heard of deserters being patronized.[13] In fact, manliness and ambition go together.[14] There is a code of service. Dishonesty and wishing the master ill is never productive of 'wisdom'.[15] A trucculent servant deserves a hell.[16] A grandee, who is not watchful in his action and lacks fortitude, loses sense, happiness and honour.[17]

12 *Rajniti Budhi-baridh*, 236 :

ਸ੍ਵਾਮੀ ਕੋ ਲਹਿ ਕਾਜ ਚਿਤ
ਕਮਰ ਕਸੈ ਹਠੁ ਆਨਿ
ਨਾ ਡਰ ਮਾਨੈ ਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਤੇ
ਅਰਪੈ ਅਪਨੀ ਜਾਨਿ

13 Ibid, 88 :

ਸਰਦ ਕਰਤ ਮਰਦਾਨਗੀ
ਜੀਤੇ ਸੂਧਰੇ ਕਾਜ
ਸੋਭਾ ਭਾਜ ਨ ਹੋਤ ਸੋ
ਕਰੈ ਗਰੀਬ ਨਿਵਾਜ

14 Ibid, 238 :

ਮਰਦ ਮਰਦਮੀ ਆਨਿ ਚਿਤ
ਕਾਰਜ ਕੇ ਹਿੱਤ ਲਾਗਿ
ਮਹੁਰਤ ਵਹਿ ਮਕਸੂਦ ਨਿਜੁ
ਕਰਤ ਮਰੱਬਤਿ ਭਾਗਿ

15 Ibid, 94 :

ਬਦਖਾਹੀ ਖਯਾਨਤ ਕਬੈ
ਕਰੈ ਨ ਅਕਲ ਤੁਫੈਲ

16 Ibid, 147 :

ਸਾਹਬ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਨ ਮਾਨਹੀ
ਸੇਵਕ ਨਾਮ ਕਹਾਇ
ਲੋਕ ਪ੍ਰਲੋਕ ਅਵਲੋਕ ਹ੍ਵੈ
ਦਰਗਹ ਲਹੈ ਸਜਾਇ

17 Ibid, 149 :

ਕਰੈ ਨ ਧੀਰਜ ਜੋ ਕੋਊ
ਕਾਰਜ ਮਾਹਿ ਬਿਚਾਰਿ
ਬੁਧਿ ਨਸੈ ਨਹਿ ਸੁਖ ਵਸੈ
ਹਸੈ ਸਕਲ ਸੰਸਾਰ

Men of rank are not without rivals. One should not be tricked by the humility of an enemy.[18] A courtier should realize the importance of money. It wins friends and brings success to one's schemings.[19] One should be discreet in raising loans. One ought not to borrow from the low born, or from beyond the pale.[20] A loan is a challenge to the wise. He should work on 'nature' to raise a loan.[21] To be tactful with one's master and enemies leads to glory.[22] This is a required accomplishment for the servants of the great.[23] Though it should be a matter of conviction yet it is politic for the courtiers never to run down those they had earlier praised in the 'images of

[18] *Rajniti Budhi-baridh*, 180 :
ਦੁਸਮਨ ਕੀ ਲਹਿ ਆਜਜ਼ੀ
ਰੀਝੈ ਨਾਹਿ ਸੁਜਾਨ

[19] Ibid, 187 :
ਬਿਨਾ ਬਿਤੁ ਕੋ ਮਿਤੁ ਨਹਿ
ਕੀਨੋਂ ਚਿੱਤ ਬਿਚਾਰ

Ibid, 186 :
ਬਿਨਾ ਦਾਮ ਨਹਿ ਕਾਮ ਕਛੁ
ਖਾਮ ਸਕਲ ਬਿਧੀ ਮਾਨ

[20] Ibid 189 :
ਜੋ ਸਮਸਰ ਹ੍ਵੈ ਆਪਨੇ
ਮਾਂਗੈ ਤਿਨਿ ਤੇ ਜਾਇ
ਨੀਚਨਿ ਤੇ ਨਹਿ ਮਾਗਿ ਐ
ਜੌ ਲੌ ਪਾਰ ਬਸਾਇ

[21] Ibid, 204 :
ਜੇ ਕਰਿ ਹੋਇ ਜ਼ਰੂਰਅਤਿ
ਆਕਲ ਕੋ ਅਜਮਾਇ
ਭਾਖੇ ਭੇਵ ਸੁਭਾਵ ਸੌ
ਤੌ ਸੁਖ ਸੰਪਤਿ ਪਾਇ

[22] Ibid, 206 :
ਸਾਹਿਬ ਸਾਥਿ ਸਹੂਰ ਕੇ
ਅਰਿ ਸੋ ਬਾਪ ਬਨਾਇ
ਕਹਿ ਹੋ ਲਹਿ ਹੋ ਅਨਿਤ ਜਸੁ
ਤਵ ਪ੍ਰਤਾਪ ਕੋ ਪਾਇ

[23] Ibid, 297 :
ਰਹਿਯੈ ਐਸੋ ਐਲਚੀ
ਆਫਤ ਅਗਨਿ ਬੁਝਾਇ

truth[24].' Battle requires initiative, zeal and 'wisdom'; good words lead to glory and happiness.[25] It is always good to be straight with one's enemies.[26] In fact, courtly virtues go in clusters: Wisdom, mercy, happiness, virtue, justice, blood, knowledge, wealth and strategem are proprietory to grandees.[27]

From the ideal courtier, we can move to the idea of king. The king should be trained in, 'wisdom' to look after his subjects.[28] A lazy king invites the ruin of his people.[29] An ordinary

24 *Rajniti Budhi-baridh*, 302

ਮੁਖ ਤੇ ਜਾਹਿ ਸਰਾਹਿਯੈ
ਸੂਰਤਿ ਸਾਚੁ ਪਛਾਨਿ
ਫਿਰ ਕੈ ਨਾ ਤਿਹਿ ਨਿੰਦਿਯੈ
ਯਹਿ ਬਡਿਅਹੁ ਕੀ ਬਾਨਿ

25 Ibid, 213:

ਜਹਾਂ ਜੰਗ ਦੈ ਜੋਸ਼ ਸੋਂ
ਹੋਸ਼ ਹਿੰਮਤੀ ਸੰਗਿ
ਖੋਲੈ ਬੋਲ ਬੈਨ ਸੁਭ
ਸੋਭਾ ਲਹੈ ਸੁਰੰਗ

26 Ibid, 221:

ਜੋ ਦਾਨਾ ਦਿਲ ਹੋਤ ਹੈ
ਦੁਸਮਨ ਦੇਖਿ ਸੁਭਾਇ
ਪਰੈ ਨ ਮਕਰ ਫਰੇਬ ਮਹਿ
ਔਰਨਿ ਲੇਤ ਬਚਾਇ

27 Ibid, 318:

ਦਾਨਾ ਦਿਲ ਜੋ ਮਰਦ ਹੈ
ਰਾਖਤ ਰਹਿਮ ਸਲਾਹ
ਸੁਖ ਸੰਪਤਿ ਸਹਿ ਸੋਭਤੇ
ਗਹਿਤੇ ਨੇਕੀ ਰਾਹ

Ibid, 337:

ਰੌਸ਼ਨ ਦਿਲ ਆਦਲ ਅਸਲ
ਸਾਹਿਬ ਇਲਮ ਅਮੀਰ
ਪੂੰਜੀ ਦੌਲਤਿ ਨੇਕ ਕੀ
ਬੂਝੀ ਤੇ ਤਦਬੀਰ

28 Ibid, 2:

ਪ੍ਰਜਾ ਪਾਲ ਕੀ ਬਿਧਿ ਪਹਿਚਾਨੇ

29 Ibid, 52:

ਸੁਸਤੀ ਸੋਂ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਜੋਊ ਪਰਾ
ਪਰਾ ਰਹੈ ਦਿਨੁ ਰੈਨਿ*

king becomes arrogant in over-ruling the country; he is too busy enjoying himself to listen to the cries of men.[30] On the contrary, a king should have insight into the ways of the land, causes of prosperity, workings of men, the nature of ruling over others and courageous manliness.[31] Watchfulness and manliness are the two royal virtues.[32] In the ultimate analysis, the per-requisites of royalty like princely virtue, truthfulness, the knack of success, commanding presence, extensive rule and wisdom is a gift of God.[33] The ideal purpose of kingly sway and taxing the country is to ensure against the calamities of internal and external lawlessness.[34] One of the royal concern is to protect

*ਤਾਕੀ ਰੈਯਤਿ ਕੋ ਕਹੋ
ਕੈਸੇ ਹ੍ਵੈ ਹੈ ਚੈਨਿ

30 *Rajniti Budhi-baridh*, 242 :
ਮੁੱਦਤ ਬਹੁਤ ਗਰੂਰ ਸ਼ੋਂ
ਕਰੀ ਹਕੂਮਤਿ ਘੂਕ
ਅਲਸਯੋਂ ਭੋਗਨ ਪਾਇਕੈ
ਸੁਨੈ ਨ ਕਾਹੂ ਕੂਕ

31 Ibid, 59 :
ਮੁਲਕ ਮਾਲ ਕੀ ਰਵਸ਼ਿ ਜੋ
ਦੂਨੀ ਕਮਾਮ ਤਮਾਮ
ਹੁਕਮ ਹਾਕਮੀ ਹੌਸਲਾ
ਸੀਖਯੋ ਕਹ ਤੇ ਕਾਮ

32 Ibid, 103 :
ਬਡੋ ਹੌਸ਼ ਹਿੰਮਤਿ ਸਹਿਤ
ਰਾਖੇ ਸੀਸ ਸੁਜਾਨ

33 Ibid, 240 :
ਖੂਬੀ ਖਾਸ ਖੁਦਾ ਦਈ
ਲਹੀ ਰਾਸਤੀ ਰਾਇ
ਕਾਮ ਦਰੂਸਤੀ ਦਬਦਬਾ
ਦੌਲਤ ਦਾਨਸ਼ ਪਾਇ

34 Ibid, 78 :
ਜੋ ਆਫਤ ਮੁਲਕਨ ਹਰੈ
ਹੁਕਮੁ ਹਾਸਲੀ ਸੰਗਿ
ਸੋ ਖਟ ਬਿਧੀ ਕੋ ਧਾਰਤੀ
ਭਾਖਤ ਬੁੱਧਿ ਉਤੰਗ

the humble against the cruel grandees.[35] He should take pre-emptive measures against rebelliousness.[36] Victory in battles is the only sanction for royal prerogatives.[37] A king should disregard caste in rewarding men of wisdom.[38] He should be gradual in extending royal favours in accordance with the rising merit of his servants.[39] There is an element of waywardness in kings who reward men for nothing or rob others for the fun of it.[40] In fact, royalty is a divine

35 *Rajniti Budhi-baridh*, 80 :

ਜ਼ੁਲਮਦਸਤ ਜੋ ਜਗਤ ਮਹਿ
ਆਜਜ਼ ਕੋਂ ਅਕੁਲਾਤ
ਤਾ ਕੋਂ ਟਾਰੈ ਦੇਸ ਤੇ
ਕੈ ਮਾਰੇ ਲਹਿ ਘਾਤ

36 Ibid, 92 :

ਆਕਲ ਤਿਹਿ ਪਹਿਚਾਨਯੈ
ਲਹੈ ਉਪਦ੍ਰਵ ਭਾਇ
ਆਗੇ ਹੀਤਾ ਸਮਝ ਕੀ
ਬਿਧਿ ਕੋਂ ਲੇਇ ਬਨਾਇ

37 Loc cit :

ਜ਼ਫਰ ਜੰਗ ਤੇ ਪਾਇਯਤੁ
ਮੁਲਕ ਮਾਲਕੀ ਸਾਥ

38 Ibid, 63 :

ਬੁੱਧਿਵੰਤਨ ਐਸੇ ਕਹਾ
ਬਿਦਯਾ ਬੜੀ ਨਿਧਾਨ
ਭੂਲੇ ਜਾਤਿ ਨ ਪਾਤਿ ਪਰਿ
ਨ੍ਰਿਪ-ਪਤਿ ਸੋਊ ਸੁਜਾਨ

39 Ibid, 338 :

ਜ਼ਾਦੇ ਮਰਤਬੁ ਨ ਕਰੈ
ਏਕਹਿ ਬੇਰਿ ਸੁਜਾਨ
ਜਯੋਂ ਜਯੋਂ ਮਾਨਸ ਪਰਖਿਯੈ
ਤਯੋਂ ਤਯੋਂ ਦੈ ਤਿਹਿ ਮਾਨ

40 Ibid, 101 :

ਬਡੇਂ ਮਰਾਤਬ ਬਖਸਤੇ
ਕਿਸਿ ਹੀ ਹੱਕ ਬਿਗੇਰ
ਕਾਹੂ ਕੇ ਗ੍ਰਿਹਿ ਲੂਟਤੇ
ਬਿਨਾ ਗੁਨਾਹ ਦਿਲੇਰ

blessing to the country.[41] A king is his own witness[42] A king is always good and right, the people, in error.[43] It is royal forgiveness that makes a go of the business of society.[44] In the inverted world of ideology, the king is said to be obliging the people by ruling over them as he is much concerned in managing their happiness with his policies.[45] Lastly, the king is more a divine than a humanb eing.[46]

If the luminous, violent world of the ruling classes finds its acme in benevolently ·peaceable, luminous king there is an

[41] *Rajniti Budhi-baridh* 145 :

ਦਇ ਬਜ਼ੁਰਗੀ ਸ਼ਹਿਸ਼ਹਨਿ ਕੋ
ਸਚੇ ਸਾਹਬ ਆਪ
ਸੁਖ ਹਿਤ ਆਲਮ ਅਸਲ ਕੇ
ਠਾਸੇ ਸਭ ਸੰਤਾਪ

[42] Ibid, 97 :

ਜਯੋਂ ਚਿਤ ਆਤੀ ਤਯੋਂ ਕਰੋ
ਤੁਮ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਸਿਰਤਾਜ
ਕੋ ਗਵਾਹ ਤੁਮਰੇ ਠਹੀ
ਬੇਡੇਨਿ ਬਡੇ ਹੀ ਕਾਜ

[43] Ibid, 293 :

ਬਾਦਸਾਹ ਬਖ਼ਸ਼ਸ਼ਿ ਕਰੇ
ਖ਼ਤਾ ਖ਼ਲਕ ਕੋ ਦੇਖ
ਸੋਭਾ ਭੂਖਨ ਪਹਿਰ ਕੇ
ਸੁੰਦਰ ਹੋਇ ਵਿਸੇਖ

[44] Ibid :

ਜੋ ਕਰਿ ਖਤਾ ਨ ਬਖਸ ਹੈਂ
ਰੋਸ਼ਨ ਰਾਇ ਜ਼ਮੀਰ
ਕਾਮ ਜਹਾਨੀ ਕਯੋਂ ਚਲੈ
ਭਾਖਤ ਬੁੱਧਿ ਗੰਭੀਰ

[45] Ibid, 302 :

ਬਡੀ ਬੁੱਧਿ ਮੈਂ ਤਾਂ ਲਹੀ
ਕਾਮਗਰੀ ਬਿਚਿ ਖ਼ਯਾਲ
ਰੈਯਤਿ ਰਾਜ਼ੀ ਰਾਖਤੋਂ
ਕਰਤ ਭਲੀ ਸਭ ਚਾਲਿ

[46] Ibid, 352 :

ਮੰਤ੍ਰੀ ਬੂਝੀ ਬਾਤ ਜਬ
ਕਯਾ ਚਿੰਤਾ ਪ੍ਰਭਿ ਭਾਪ

area of darkness below them. Its denizens are not men but 'the low', who are as good as 'dead'. They are the ruled who live without honour.[47] The people are like children, dishnourable, foolish and low.[48] The poor are ignorant of the joys of life to be as good as dead.[49] They should not talk big or ill of others. Their virtue is to be engrossed in their selves. That way lies their safety.[50] Forced labour is a part of their lot.[51] Their wisdom lies in obedience.[52] An upward social mobility

[47] *Rajniti Budhi-baridh*, 214.

ਐਸੋ ਕਬਹੁ ਨ ਕਾਮ ਕੈ
ਰੁਸ਼ਨਾਈ ਹ੍ਵੈ ਛੀਨਿ
ਬਦੀ ਬਹੁਤਿ ਬਿਸਬਾਹ ਹ੍ਵੈ
ਪਛੁਤਾਵੈ ਹ੍ਵੈ ਦੀਨ

[48] Ibid, 243 :

ਨਾਦਾਨੀ ਕੋ ਪਾਇਕੈ
ਖਵਾਰੀ ਖਲਕਤਿ ਬੀਚ
ਪਾਤੇ ਹੈ ਬਹੁ ਜੋ ਮੁਗਹਿ
ਤੇ ਨਰ ਜਾਨਹ ਨੀਚ

[49] Ibid, 188 :

ਜੇ ਜਨ ਅਹੈ ਕੰਗਾਲ ਜਗ
...
ਲਜੱਤਿ ਦੁਨੀ ਨ ਪਾਈਯਤੁ
ਜੀਵਤ ਹੀ ਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਮਾਨ

[50] Ibid, 79-80 :

ਬੁਰਾ ਨ ਬੋਲੇ ਬੈਨ ਬਡ
ਮਾਰੇ ਨ ਵਹਿ ਕੋਇ
ਨੇਕੀ ਨਯਾਮਤਿ ਪਾਇ ਕੈ
ਰਹੈ ਮਗਨ ਮਨ ਹੋਇ

[51] Ibid, 270 :

ਕਾਰ ਬਿਰਾਨੀ ਕਰਨ ਤੇ
ਆ ਤੀ ਹੈ ਮੁਹਿ ਲਾਜ਼

loc cit :

ਖਰੋ ਮਜ਼ੂਰੀ ਦੂਰੀ ਜਾਨ
ਸ਼ਰਮ ਨ ਖਾਉ ਸੁਖ ਪਹਿਚਾਨਿ

[52] Ibid, 287 :

ਮਾਨਾ ਨਾ ਫੁਰਮਾਨ ਸਹਿ
ਚਾਕਰ ਕਮੁਤੀ ਪਾਇ

can be fatal to men of lower classes.[53] In the story of rustics in chapter viii the author is very unself-consciously contemptuous of the Jats. He takes it for granted that his ruling class reader would not take it amiss. They are the victims of forced labour, their women are sharp-tongued, and men go mad at the slighest loss.[54] It appears from this work that any identification of Sikh rule with Jats or Jat Sikhs is misconceived.

Rajniti Budhibaridh is incapable of conceiving universal man. Men are divided into three categories : (1) the ones who love carrion comforts, (2) life (3) or greatness of rank.[55] The author shows professional weakness by making a fourth category of the 'wise'. Though religion is the final authority of the world[56] yet it has been equated with wealth.[57] Virtue can

53 *Rajniti Budhi-baridh* 219 :

ਨੀਚਿ ਊਚਤਾ ਪਾਇਕੈ
ਜਾਨੈ ਨ ਤਿਹਿ ਰਾਖਿ
ਗਿਰੈ ਸੁ ਗਰਦਨ ਭਾਰ ਹੈ
ਕੋਈ ਭਰੇ ਨ ਸਾਖਿ

54 Ibid, 351 :

ਯਾਦ ਪਰੀ ਜਬ ਜਾਟ ਕੇ
ਜਰ ਕੀ ਸੁਧਿ ਬਿਹਾਨ
ਰੁਦਨ ਕਰਨ ਲਾਗਯੋ ਤਬੈ
ਬਿਸਰੀ ਸਕਲ ਸਿਆਨਿ

55 Ibid, 44 :

ਅਵੱਲ ਅਹੋ ਅਰਾਮ ਜਗਿ
ਜੀਵਨ ਦੁਤਿਯ ਪਛਾਨ
ਤ੍ਰਿਤੀ ਬਜੁਰਗ ਮਰਾਤਬਾ
ਚਾਹਤ ਸੁਘਰੁ ਸਜਾਨ

56 Ibid, 110 :

ਮਜਹਬ ਕੌਨ ਸਮੇ ਕਹਯੋ

ibid, 310 :

ਨਰਕ ਸੁਰਗ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ ਕਿਨਿ ਦਿਖੈ
ਯੋ ਕਹ ਜੜ ਗਰਬਾਤ

57 Ibid, 44 :

ਧਨ ਤੇ ਧਰਮ ਧਰ ਧਰ ਹੋਤਿ
ਤਾ ਬਿਨ ਕਾਰਜੁ ਨਾਹਿ ਉਦੋਤ

be had with vigilance, initiative and a bit of luck.[58] Mind is equated with aristocratic blood[59] and the wherewithal of the rich.[60] Only fools are unhappy,[61] and it is their own fault if they cannot be 'educated' into a better world.[62] Such a .class view of man is in harmony with the dishonourably 'dead' people.

Rajniti Budhi-baridh epitomizes at horoughly medieval world. God is the mainspring of economics of men, birds and beasts, kings and saints.[63] Fate is the ruling principle of society and

58 *Rajniti Budhi-baridh,* 51 :

ਨੇਕੀ ਨਯਾਮਤਿ ਹੈ ਬਡੀ
ਚਾਹਤ ਹੈ ਸਭੁ ਕੋਇ
ਹੋਸ਼ ਹਿੰਮਤੀ ਤੇ ਅਹੈ
ਲਹੈ ਕਰਮ ਜਿਹਿ ਹੋਇ

59 Ibid, 59 ;

ਆਕਲ ਅਸਲ ਅਸੀਲ ਕੀ
ਕਹੀ ਕਹੋ ਸੁਨੁ ਬੀਰ

60 Ibid, 59 :

ਦੌਲਤ ਰੌਸ਼ਨ ਜੈ ਹਵੈ
ਕੀਨਾ ਹੈ ਇਹਿ ਕਾਮ
ਜਮੈ ਅਕ੍ਲ ਅਸਬਾਬ ਸਭ
ਜਲਵੈ ਹੂਆ ਤਮਾਮ

61 Ibid, 64 :

ਨਿਜਦੀਕੀ ਬੇਅਕਲ ਜੋ
ਲਾਯਕ ਭਲੇ ਨ ਜਾਨੁ
ਰਹੈ ਦੂਰਿ ਸੁਖ ਮੂਰ ਸੋ
ਹੁਤਾ ਨ ਬਿਗਾਨੋ ਮਾਨੁ

62 Ibid, 120 :

ਮੂਰਖ ਸੀਖਿ ਨ ਮਾਨਹੀ
ਕਹਿ ਪਚਿ ਹਾਰੇ ਕੋਇ

63 Ibid, 101 :

ਰਬ ਅਲਮੀ ਦੇਤੁ ਹੈ
ਰੋਜ਼ੀ ਰੋਜ਼ੀ ਹਮੇਸ਼
ਪਸੁ ਪੰਛੀ ਜਲਿ ਥਲਿ ਬਸਤ
ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹ ਦਰਵੇਸ਼

history.[64] Significantly the transience of empires is equated with an immoral woman[65]—an arch homologue of the oppressed. In the chancy world, efforts to achieve rank is both doubtful and dangerous.[66] It is only when fortune smiles that a courtier has a sympathetic retinue.[67] A stoic attitude to one's rise and fall is the only proper one.[68] Needless to say

[64] *Rajniti Budhi-baridh*, 30 :

ਅਕਲ ਸਕਲ ਨਹਿ ਚਲਤਿ ਕਛੁ
ਹੋਨੀ ਪਰਿ ਚਿਤੁ ਰਾਖੁ

ibid, 104 :

ਗੁਨ ਹੀ ਔਗੁਨ ਹੋਤ ਹੈ
ਬਿਧਨਾ ਗਤ ਬਲਵਾਨ

ibid, 106 :

ਭਾਵੀ ਭਵ ਮਹਿ ਹੈ ਬਲੀ
ਆਤੀ ਅਟਕਤ ਨਾਂਹਿ

[65] Ibid, 224 :

ਦੁਨਿਯਾ ਦੌਲਤ ਦੇ ਗਈ
ਦਗਾ ਸਾਥਿ ਸੁਲਤਾਨ
ਬਸੀ ਔਰ ਕੇ ਅੰਕ ਮਹਿ
ਬਿਭਚਾਰਨਿ ਇਵ ਬਾਨਿ

ibid, 182 :

ਹੈ ਯਹਿ ਦੁਨਿਯਾ ਬੇਦਰਦ
...
ਛਿਨ ਔਰੇ ਛਿਨਿ ਔਰ ਕਰਿ
ਰਖਤੀ ਯਾਰ ਨਵੇਲ

[66] Ibid, 56 :

ਪੁਰਿ ਖਤਰਯੋ ਕਾ ਪਾਵਨਾ
ਮਾਰਗ ਮਰਗ ਮਹਾਨ
ਖਯਾਲ ਤਮਾਮੀ ਨਠੇ ਵਹ
ਬੇਅਕਲੀ ਪਹਿਚਾਨ

[67] Ibid, 205 :

ਸਾਯਾ ਬਖਤੀ ਨੇਕ ਜਿਹਿ
ਦਰਦਵੰਦ ਬਿਸੀਯਾਰ

[68] Ibid, 314 :

ਦਾਨਾ ਦਿਲ ਕੋ ਚਾਹਿਐ
ਖੁਸੀ ਰਹੇ ਸਬ ਰੋਜ*

that one needs a manly initiative and wisdom to escape from dishonourable world of the 'dead'.

Rajniti Budhi-baridh embodies the paradox of Sikh history when the original Sikh idea of political sovereignty could be achieved only by jettisoning its moral and universal inspiration. The author is glad to forget about the mainspring of Sikh history — the conflict between a religion and the state. The author is keen to emphasize the harmony of the economy of kings and saints under Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Secondly, the author conveniently forgets the recent Sikh idea of Guru Panth when 'the wretched of the earth' could partake of divinity. Under Maharaja Ranjit Singh the ruled symbolically inhabit a nether world without power, honour, wisdom or light. *Rajniti Budhi-baridh* is both a Sikh and an un-Sikh work. It is Sikh in the sense that in some way, it represents the life and times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, a Sikh ruler. It is un-Sikh in the sense that its inspiration is neither from Sikh history nor from Sikh scriptures. It is inspired by a shallow secularism of convenience of the composite Sikh-Hindu-Muslim ruling class. It has an attractive patina of Panjabi-ism. *Rajniti-Budhi-baridh* has no idea of 'external enemy'. It only celebrates a more than 'divine right of king' to rule. 'Until the end of the eighteenth century the (Europeans) were sensible enough to realize that overseas territorial conquests were not within the realm of reasonable possibility'.[69] It is an irony of history that the climax of Sikh history under Maharaja Ranjit Singh was reached on the eve of its dissolution under the Western impact through the British. *Rajniti Budhi-baridh* is silently eloquent on this aspect of the kingdom of Lahore.

*ਮਾਨਿ ਰਜਾਂਇ ਇਲਾਹਿ ਕੀ
ਬਿਨਸਤ ਲਹਿ ਸੁਖ ਰੈਜ਼

Rajniti Budhi-barid, 330 :

ਗੁਜਰੀ ਕੋ ਗਮ ਨ ਕਰੈ
ਧਰੈ ਅਕਲ ਦਿਲ ਹੋਸ਼

69 Carlo M. Cippola, *Clock and Culture* (in his *European Culture and Overseas Expansion*), Perguins 1970, 149.

Kissa in the Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh

Tejwant S. Gill*

At various stages of its origin, growth and dissolution, *kissa* as literary genre had love-hate relation with the Mughal domination and the Sikh struggle waged against it in the Punjab. These two contrary and conflicting forces of history contributed a lot to the content, form and style that *kissa* came to have as its own during the long and complex process of maturation. All the same the philosophy of life adumbrated in it was not in accord with impulses and experiences available from nature that enveloped the complex of these historical forces as ambience.

This was natural for several reasons, general and specific at the same time. As Antonio Labviola has maintained, 'Men living in society do not thereby cease also to live in nature and receive occasion and material from if for their curiosity and fantasy'.[1] After all human dependence upon nature howsoever diminished since prehistoric times persists as does matter for curiosity and fantasy furnished by the spectacles and forces of nature. This persistence is all the more so in the case of those people who are either reluctant to identify themselves with the historical forces or have become sceptic of their efficacy.

During the course of the long drawn out conflict between the Sikhs and the Mughals there were people particularly in

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1 Antonio Labviola, *Essay in the Materialistic Conception of History*, Chicago University Press 1906, 207.

the countryside who were responsive to this persistence. The torpor resulting from what Karl Marx termed as 'the Asiatic mode of production'[2] impelled them on to regard these impulses and experiences as the essence of life itself. The critical and to some extent rebellious stance adopted by the Sufi saints encouraged them further to remain aloof from the arena of history. As against the warm and organic world of nature, the social world sanctioned by history seemed cold and comfortless to them for all the constrictions that it exercised upon itself in the form of theological prescriptions, legal measures and social customs. Their natural wish was to advance all that was non-social and non-historical to the position and criterion of all that was social and historical.

In the event of this advance, birth, copulation and death become the singular surrogates of life. Time has not wrought any change in them and they have withstood the onslaught of theological prescriptions, legal measures and social customs as well. Naturally birth, copulation and death became ideological norms for those people. In this way their wish to advance non-social and non-historical to the position and criterion of social and historical was realised to a large extent. In the process, *kissa* as literary genre became their testament. As written text exploiting all the devices of oral tradition, it could have only those people as its ideal audience.

Only in *Kissa Heer Waris* could this aim be realised in all its excellence and richness. At the stage of its origin, *kissa* evoked only the autochthonous aspect of the Panjabi countryside. This is vouchsafed by *Mirza Sahiban* and *Heer Ranjha* written by Piloo and Damodar respectively. In these *kissas* the main burden falls on the narration of indigenous love-tales in a folkloric way. It was natural to be so because at the time that these *kissas* came to be written the Mughal rule was not oppressive to the extent it subsequently became. For this lack of oppression, the Sikh struggle was in its incipient stage.

2 Karl Marx and F. Engels. *On Colonialism*. Progress Publishers, Moscow 1959, 35-36.

It was asserting its spiritual hegemony but as yet it had not waged a war for political sovereignty. The burden upon the cultivated land was not so much as to warrant confiscations and evictions. At this juncture autochthonous existence was not without a value of its own and it is this value that was affirmed in the *kissas* of Piloo and Damodar.

Excellence and richness to the extent possible accrued to the *kissa* in *Heer Waris* that came to be written in times of internecine warfare between the Sikhs and the Mughals. Living in the territories belonging to the Sukarchakias during the life-span of Sardar Charhat Singh, Waris Shah was an ardent Sufi by disposition. Torn by warfare as the world of society was, Waris Shah was impelled to reject it for the world of nature that was its ambience and contrary at the same time. So far more than the narrative of an indigenous love-tale, *Heer Waris* became a complex of the conflicting worlds of society and nature.

These worlds of society and nature are contrary but not antinominal to each other in the structuralist sense of the word. The world of society is closed on all sides because religious prescriptions, legal measures and social customs impinge upon it in a rigorous way. Cumulatively they forbid marriage through love and sanction one through kinship only. By implication they warrant determination of men and women as objects of manipulation rather than as subjects of affirmation.

Though precarious in spatial extension and temporal in duration the world of nature is its contrary. Lurking around in uncultivated land, it provides full scope for the suspension of the reality-principle and exercise of the pleasure-principle; through it they respond to food, play, love and sleep in an extraordinary way. Their food is of *chooree*, an amalgam of ghee and bread that is, all that is available at best from cattle-breeding and land-cultivation. Their play comprises vigorous bodily exercises which excites them for an erotic union of the passionate type. During this erotic union, their bodies open up with protuberances, convexities and apertures in full

operation. They no longer remain closed and finished as the world of society may ordain them to be. To all intents and purposes, it is the lower stratum of the human body that is glorified at the cost of its upper stratum. All the same, the upper stratum is not ignored, it is evoked to indicate the tragedy of the lower stratum that is, of the world of nature at the altar of the world of society.

During the times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh the world of the people changed so as to implement important changes in *kissa* as a literary genre. The earlier internecine warfare tended to subside and after a century or so the world of society became worthy to live in. The warfare waged now had a different motive. It was meant to expand and consolidate the kingdom so as to add to the worthiness of the world of society. As a result the Punjab was transformed into a sovereign kingdom. As Sant Singh Sekhon has remarked, 'If the historical process does not have any final determinations, it is in the Panjab given a sovereign status for the first time by Ranjit Singh that its indeterminateness can most clearly be seen'.[3] This was a stupendous achievement indeed on the part of the world of society. As the later historical process has come to reveal, history, which does not observe final determinations, saw the Punjab sovereign for the first and perhaps the last time only in the times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

On account of this stupendous achievement *kissa* imbibed important changes in content, form, style and tone. Rather than address itself to the people wishing to advance the non-social and non-historical content, it addressed itself to the people actively engaged in affirming the social and historical content as the essence of life. In this way they tried to undo the historical destiny of the Punjabis that had been sanctioned by natural, racial and religious factors. The consolidation and expansion of the kingdom under the rule of Maharaja Ranjit Singh was the result as well as the evidence of the stupendous struggle waged by them for this purpose.

[3] Sant Singh Sekhon, Review of Shahamat Ali's *The Sikhs and Afghans*, *The Journal of Religious Studies* (Spring 1971), 207.

In the natural context the Punjab was land on the east and west of which stretched two vast lands of antithetical historical destinies. On the east was India whose people led the Indo-Vedic way of life. Sustained by the fertile land of the Indo-Gangetic plain they had not to toil much for their living. Their life observed the rhythm of natural torpor. Rather than realise their potentiality through historical struggle they sought solace in mythology. As Karl Marx was to observe this way of living warranted two consequences. Firstly, it occasioned the perpetuation of Indian society in the form of little village-communities, contaminated by distinctions of caste and poverty 'subjugated man to external circumstances instead of elevating man to be the sovereign of circumstances'. They also transformed 'a self-developing social state into never-changing natural destiny and thus brought about a brutalizing worship of nature'. Secondly, the above mentioned way of life produced 'a religion of sensualist exuberance and a religion of self-torturing, asceticism'. Both these consequences made India's historical destiny identical with her predisposition to be conquered. No wonder Karl Marx was led to remark, 'Indian society has no history at all, atleast no known history. What we call its history is but the history of the successive intruders who founded their empires on the passive basis of that unresisting and unchanging society'.[4]

To the west of the Punjab stretched a vast land on which had flourished the Arabic-Persian civilization. Partly of hills and partly of deserts it was a scorched land on which the people were required to exercise a great initiative and will for earning a living. Strengthened by their unceasing struggle against nature, they turned to India as Arabs, Turks, Tartars and Mughals for successive conquests. It is, of course, the irony of life that subsequently in India they found their instinct of struggle conquered by natural torpor so characteristic of the Indian way of life. Instinct for waging struggle attuned

[4] Karl Marx, *On Colonialism*, 40.

the Arabic-Persian life to historical destiny identical with predisposition to conquer. As against mythology, it was history that became the central factor of this life.

Situated between these two vast lands of the antithetical sort, the Punjab responded to both because it was a part of one or the other in different historical periods. As against the predispositions of both it developed its own predisposition to resist. No wonder Punjabi life could neither identify itself with mythology so characteristic of natural, destiny nor realise itself through history so characteristic of historical struggle. It could remain only at the level of the folklore that was responsive to both mythology and history but was not identical with either. Being anthropocentric and anthropomorphic at the same time, it related itself to nature, but alongwith changes implemented by history into life at the natural terrain.

Till the rise and growth of the Sikh struggle, folkloric preoccupation had been the destiny of the Punjabi people. It goes to the credit of the Sikh struggle that it transformed this folkloric preoccupation into historical destiny, the consummation of which came towards the expansion and consolidation of the Sikh kingdom under the rule of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. In the forefront of this historical struggle were Sikh *sardars* nurtured upon *vars*, rugged compositions with heroic content. They eulogised the resistance put up from time to time by indigenous heroes to intruders from the vast land stretching to the west of the Punjab. Continuous consolidation and expansion of the kingdom created a situation with a new ethos that could hardly be conveyed through these rugged compositions. Now was required a form that derived themes and motifs from beyond the autochthonous body, the heavy weapons, the blood-covered battlefield and the internecine warfare.

It was *kissa* that rose upto meet the challenge posed by the consolidation and expansion of the kingdom. As a result *kissakars* like Hasham, Qadir Yar and Ahmad Yar, gave a new direction to its composition, subject-matter and truth content. So far its composition had been impelled by intrnsici

rather than extrinsic motive. For example, Waris Shah composed *Heer Waris* to articulate his failure born of his desperate love for a Jat woman, Bhagbhari by name. No wonder she receives several types of admonitions at various places in his composition. Of course, his whole motivation is not exhausted by this inner compulsion. To it is to be added his great concern for the populace of 'Qasur' his native city that was threatened with destruction on account of internecine warfare raging in the Punjab. This is again an intrinsic motive though its nature differs from that of the one born of his personal failure in love. Suggestion from well-wishers and friends is also mentioned as a motive in the beginning. This is an extrinsic motive indeed but so incipient it is that it does not explain the whole impulsion of this great work of literature.

Kissakars of the time of Maharaja Ranjit Singh transformed this compositional process. Bringing extrinsic motive into the foreground and driving to the background the intrinsic motive if at all there was any, they transformed this compositional process into a profession responsive to the proclivities of their patrons. No wonder all of them avowed connections with the court of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Hasham and Qadir Yar were, of course, known court-poets of those times. A typological distinction can be made with respect to their patrons by taking into consideration the subject-matter and truth-content of their *kissas*. Probably Hasham sought patronage from those who had assumed the onerous burden of consolidating the kingdom and Qadar Yar turned for it to those who were assigned the task of expanding its frontiers. Ahmad Yar, the most prolific of them all, was patronized by the populace in general without whose implementation nobody, least of all Maharaja Ranjit Singh, could have thought of consolidating and expanding the kingdom.

The compositional process became a profession thus, widened its scope with respect to its subject-matter. Earlier indigenous love-tales had remained the source of subject-matter. Evidence of it becomes readily available whether it is

Mirza Sahiban of Piloo or *Sohni Mahiwal* of Hafiz Barkhurdar or *Heer Waris* of Waris Shah that comes up for consideration. At this new historical juncture, *kissakars* did not confine themselves to the narration of indigenous love-tales only. They freely sought tales from the Arabic-Persian and Vedic-Indian sources. Whereas Qadir Yar narrated an indigenous love-tale in *Puran Bhagat*, Hasham employed one from Arabic-Persian source for *Sassi Punnu*. Ahmad Yar tapped both the alien sources alongwith the indigenous one. He was indebted to Vedic-Indian source for *Kamrup* and *Chander Badan* and to Arabic-Persian source for *Hatam Tai*, *Saiful Malook* and *Yusuf Zulaikha*.

Thus widened in scope, the subject-matter had its repercussion on the theme of *kissa* at this new historical juncture. Naturally its theme could not remain confined to affirmation of love at the natural terrain as against marriage through kinship It is this theme that is at the centre of *Heer Waris*, *Mirza Sahiban* and *Sohni Mahiwal*; in the former though religious sanctions, legal prescriptions and social customs come in for severe criticism. Although this criticism is foregrounded by affirmation of love at the natural terrain, in a dialectical relationship between background and foreground, it is the latter that is more luminous and epiphanic at the same time.

Kissas of the time of Maharaja Ranjit Singh innovate a different type of convention. Instead of awarding multiple background of social relations, experiences and values to the foreground of love at the natural terrain, they tend to surround it with metaphysical and libidinal veils. In Hasham's *Sassi Punnu* this metaphysical veil is synonymous with fatalism of the irreversible type. As a result, what happened to Sassi was bound to happen. There could not be any escape or respite from that. Every incident ranging from her birth in the royal palace to her death in the undulating desert was predetermined. Her growing-up in the house of a washerman subsequently turned it into a palace and her untoxicating union with Punnu could not undo what fate had destined to do. All this is liable to

convey the impressisn to a superficial observer atleast that like Thomas Hardy, Hasham believed in some immanent Will that looked malignantly upon human beings. So far as Thomas Hardy is concerned there is much logic in the malignancy of the immanent Will. It is proportionate to the Will and initiative of the person. In Hasham, however, this logic is not to be found there at all. Sassi suffered in the way in which she was destined to suffer. Like a categorical imperative, her fate willed all including her royal birth and miserable death.

In Qadir Yar's *Puran Bhagat*, Puran had to suffer mutilation at the hands of his aged father for rebuffing the viles of his step-mother. He did not have any incestuous inclination as he was alleged to have by his step-mother who, being evil-incarnate, wanted to seduce him. He was also free from the primal instinct of revolt against the primal father who appropriated to himself the women folk of the tribe. In this composition in short, the step-mother did not have the psychological drive for seducing her step-son as she has come to possess of late in Shiv Kumar's *Loona*. Similarly, fate had not destined this mutilation for Puran in Qadir Yar but it would have been a categorical imperative if Hasham had used this subject-matter for composing his own *kissa*. In the absence of psychological and social drives, the fact of the step-mother being evil-incarnate was the *raison d'etre* for transforming this subject-matter into truth-content.

As a natural consequence of this thematic innovation, *kissa* at this historical juncture, more or less dispensed with autochthonous lovers making love at the terrain of nature. Their place was taken up by kings and queens and princes and princesses who, more than physical, had metaphysical proclivity for each other. In Hasham's *Sassi-Punnu*, for example, Sassi as an infant was consigned to be drowned in a river so that her royal parents might be saved from the ignominy that was in store for them on account of her misadventure in love. At this cataclysmic moment, however, she carried so much wealth alongwith her in the box that the washerman who

recovered her could easily construct palaces for leading a royal life subsequently. In Qadir Yar's *Puran Bhagat* as well, the characters figure themselves as royal notwithstanding the step-mother who as the fable went, was a cobbler's daughter that is, of a person belonging to the lowest caste possible. In Ahmad Yar's compositions also preponderance went to royal characters though he lacked the competence to delineate their regal contours.

Related to this thematic innovation is the introducation of motifs, particularly that of the journey in the *kissa* of the times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Of course, this motif figured in earlier *kissa* as well. For example, in *Heer Waris,* Ranjha travelled from his native village Takhat Hazara to Heer's village Jhang Syal prior to her forced marriage with Saida. Afterwards he travelled to Khera, the village of her in-laws, and after elopment to Jhang Syal and Takhat Hazara again. In the whole complex of this great work of literature, the motif of the journey was a metaphor to denote the irreconciliable conflict between the worlds of society and nature. It was not a way of life as the celebrated Pakistani critic Nazm Hussain Sayyid[5] is led to construe by imparting excessive significance to the crossing of the river. Thereby *kissa* tends to be interpreted as an allegory with which it is not identical by virtue of its autochthonous form.

Motif of the journey became a way of life in *kissa* at the new historical juncture. As a result it did not remain a link between far-flung villages situated in isolation from each other in the Punjabi countryside only. Now it became a link between distant countries. In Hasham's *Sassi Punnu* there was a journey across the undulating desert from one country to another. In Ahmad Yar's *Kamrup* it extended itself to the subterranean regions underneath the earth and terrestial regions in the heavens. This

[5] Mention may be made of *Sedhan*, a book of literary criticism by Nazm Hussain Sayyid to the publication of which in the Punjabi script, the author of this research-paper has contributed a long critical introduction.

imparted to *kissa* an element of the fairytale but without the liberation that the fairytale had in store for its characters. Notwithstanding the fact that journey was a way of life for characters in this new *kissa*, melancholy hung heavy upon them. This tended to award an allegorical proportion to it. Melancholy is an integral part of allegory. As Walter Benjamin has observed, 'Melancholy betrays the world for the sake of knowledge. But in its tenacious self-absorption it embraces dead objects in its contemplation in order to redeem them'.[6] This is very true of these compositons but to the extent to which creative competence has been brought to bear upon them.

In spite of these innovations, *kissa* in the times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh failed to renovate itself to the extent to which it was essential for its growth in future. Ironically enough it went towards its decline from this juncture onwards. The logic of its decline can be related to the dissolution of the kingdom. It was a sovereign kingdom that Punjab came to have for the first time in known history. Consolidation and expansion were the forces strengthening the sovereignty of the kingdom.

In the absence of hegemony, however, this sovereignty could have only a limited scope and duration. As distinct from domination, hegemony is the rule that is exercised through education, ideology and intellectual renovation. As Antonio Gramsci, the greatest advocate of the philosophy of hegemony in the Marxist context, has asserted 'To the extent that ideologies are historically necessary they have a validity which is psychological; they organise human masses, and create the terrain on which men move, acquire consciousness of their position, struggle, etc'.[7] In other words exercise of hegemony unifies the people enabling them to realise all their potentia-

6 Walter Benjamin, *Origin of German Tragic Drama*, New Left Books, 1977, 157.

7 Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, Lawrence & Wishart, London 1973, 376.

lities. It strengthens the state and enriches the human beings to develop natural-historical personalities.

The kingdom of Maharaja Ranjit Singh was very deficient in this respect. It had no educational programme at all. In the absence of educational programme, the very mention of the word hegemony becomes sacrilegious. Naturally the absence of hegemony had its impact upon *kissa* as it determined the Bonapartist nature of the kingdom. It could experience innovations to the extent to which sovereignty was a fact of life. Bereft of hegemony as this sovereignty was, *kissa* could not develop these innovations into a new genre. As a result like the kingdom itself, *kissa* also declined towards its dissolution. In this way dissolution of *kissa* was parallel to the dissolution of the kingdom.

Qadir Yar's Poetry In Relation to His Age

Daljinder Singh*

Qadir Yar was born around 1805 and lived into the 1850s. He was a Musalman Jat of Sandhu subcaste who belonged to *Machhike*, a village near Shaikhupura.[1] He received his spiritual education from his *murshid* Lal Shah. He is believed to have abandoned his parental agricultural occupation and started writing poetry due to the fractious behaviour of his brothers.[2] In 1832 he completed his earliest work *Mi'raj Nama*. His popular works are *Puran Bhagat* in *bait* metre and *Sohni Mahiwal* in *dohras*. His *Puran Bhagat* in balladic form and *Raja Rasalu*, under the title of *Rani Kokilan di Lok Gatha*, are recorded by Richard Temple in his *Punjab dian Lok Gathawan*.[3] Qadir Yar also wrote *Si-harfi Sardar Hari Singh Nalua* around 1840.

The reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh was beneficial to the Punjabi poets. Earlier, the Punjabi bards, minstrels and poets worked on the basis of mass patronage since their poetry

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1 Sant Singh Sekhon, *Parsidh Punjabi Kavi*, Lahore Book Shop, Ludhiana, 217 &218; Bawa Budh Singh, *Bombiha Bol*, Moti Ram Manager, Lahore 1925, 161; Maula Bakhsh Kushta, *Punjab de Hire*, Lahore Book Shop, Ludhiana 1950, 71; Qadir Yar, *Qissa Puran Bhagat*, Amrit Pustak Bhandar, Amritsar, 24.

2 Gurcharan Singh, *Qadir Yar*, Punjab Languages Dapartment, Patiala 1969, 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5.

3 Qadir Yar, "*Puran Bhagat*" in *Punjab dian Lok Gathawan* (ed Richard Temple), Punjab Languages Department Patiala 1971, II, 196-227; Qadir Yar, "*Rani Kokilan di Lok Gatha*", ibid, III, 132-37.

hardly interested the Mughal aristocracy. But now the Jat Sikh rulers patronized the Punjabi poets. Romantic and war poetry was produced by the poets for their rulers.

Qadir Yar's *Puran Bhagat* appears to have been composed for the general mass of the people, particularly the Hindus. He received a well *(khuh)* in reward for narrating, as he says, the story of Raja Puran.[4] Ganesh Das mentions Qadir Bakhsh (an earlier name of Qadir Yar) as the first writer on Puran Bhagat.[5] The very choice of the theme was important. The Hindus could find in it something of their ancient tradition. The poet presents Puran and his father Salvahan, the king of Sialkot, as belonging to the lineage of the great Hindu king Bikramajit of Ujjain.[6] Rani Lunan, the step-mother of Puran, who loved and calumniated her stepson, is represented as a *chamiari* by caste.[7]

Addressing his audience Qadir Yar hopes to invoke its religious sentiments in the name of those who have given life to keep their promise with God.[8] Puran would rather accept mutilation than yield to the libidinous Lunan.[9] His acceptance of an ordeal stood for his strength.[10] He remained alive in a barren well for about twelve years till Gorakh Nath restored the limbs of his would-be disciple.[11] He revisits Sialkot and makes the parched garden of his father bloom again.[12] He restores his mother's sight which she had lost weeping for him.[13] Above all, he was a distinguished *jogi*-disciple. He was sent to Rani Sundran to beg alms. She would fain make him

[4] Qadir Yar, *Qissa Puran Bhagat*, 24.

[5] J.S. Grewal and Indu Banga (tr & ed), *Early Nineteenth Century Panjab*, Guru Nanak (Dev) University, Amritsar 1975, 88.

[6] Qadir Yar, "*Puran Bhagat*" in *Qadir Yar* (ed Gurcharan Singh), Punjab Languages Department, Patiala 1969, 40.

[7] Ibid, 26.

[8] Ibid, 43.

[9] Ibid, 30.

[10] Ibid, 33.

[11] Ibid, 38-39.

[12] Ibid, 52.

[13] Ibid, 56.

her husband and king. But he refused to be a ruler and, even when bidden by Gorakh Nath, he disobeyed his Guru for the sake of celibacy.[14] Indeed these are some of the themes in the story on which the poet could effectively bank upon.

Throughout the story he has brought out qualities, beliefs and practices which are purely Hindu in character. Though it is not possible today to react in the manner his audience did in his own days, he appears to have succeeded in actualizing the feelings of his women audience. With his simple but dramatic dialogues he could easily arouse motherly affection for sons and hatred among co-wives. It is particularly so when Puran separates from his mother Ichhran and also when Lunan shows no mercy to the son of a co-wife.[15]

Qadir Yar's dependence on his public is greater in his ballad *Puran Bhagat* and *Raja Rasalu* which were probably done for the rural audience where *dhadis* could sing them on their *dhads* and *sarangis*.[16] Falling into a coherent pattern of a primitive world-view his works could not but associate birds and animals with the heroes. When Salvahan proceeds homeward after marrying Lunan, a partridge calls on his right as a bad omen. A crow warning against Lunan is a better observer.[17] In *Raja Rasalu*, Kokilan the queen likes and loves *hira hiran* (musk deer). Rasalu the king feels jealous of the animal and cuts his tail. The deer takes revenge. He induces Raja Hodi, an enemy of Rasalu, to entangle Rani Kokilan in love. Hodi succeeds in doing so in her husband's absence. Rasalu's parrot brings him home and indicates where the interloper was concealing.[18]

In conformity with the *dhadi* mode of narration, a story

[14] Qadir Yar, "Puran Bhagat" (ed Gurcharan Singh), 43, 44, 46, 49, 50 & 51.

[15] Ibid, 30, 34, 35, 37 & 54-56.

[16] Qadir Yar, "Puran Bhagat" in *Punjab dian Lok Gathawan* (ed Richard Temple), II, 227.

[17] Ibid, 204.

[18] Qadir Yar, *Rani Kokilan di Lok Gatha*, 132, 133, 134 & 135-37.

had to be instructive and proverbial to generalize social truths. For example, in *Puran Bhagat* a son is the crown of a family ; a wife, of the house ; a king, of his subjects ; and clouds, of the earth.[19] Again, a son is a must to perpetuate the family ; a banker, to help one's honour ; and a spiritual guide, to secure redemption.[20] Subscribing to Hindu beliefs and practices, Salvahan's marriage with Lunan has to be justified. When Lunan, a *chamiari*, hesitates to marry Salvahan on account of her low origin, a danger to his Khatri caste, the latter tells her that there is no harm in seizing gold, knowledge and a low caste woman.[21] In *Raja Rasalu*, to clean a sword is to take blood ; a horse fed excessively on pulses brings defeat in the field and a woman kept indulgently is a source of distress.[22]

Qadir Yar's allegiance to the Sikhs comes to the fore in his *Si-harfi Sardar Hari Singh Nalua*. His eulogistic purpose is quite clear. Hari Singh Nalua was the bravest of Ranjit Singh's generals. Moreover, he hailed from Gujranwala, the native region of the poet. His heroic deed at Jamrud, says Qadir Yar, is widely known and sung by the people.[23] Hari Singh has left behind him a tradition time cannot obliterate.[24] He is the chastiser of the unruly Pathans of the hills. He stands above all the king's officers. He is a distinguished fencer. His thunderous march towards Peshawar causes terror among the Khaibaris. Dost Muhammad dare not proceed beyond Kabul. To extol his administrative ability and sense of justice Qadir Yar seems happy to place Hari Singh at par with Raja Karan Raja Bikramajit and Hatim Tai.[25]

19 Qadir Yar, "Puran Bhagat" (ed Richard Temple), 209.

20 Ibid, 206.

21 Ibid, 202.

22 Qadir Yar, *Rani Kokilan di Lok Gatha* 137.

23 Qadir Yar, "Si-harfi Sardar Hari Singh Nalua", in *Qadir Yar* (ed Gurcharan Singh), Punjab Languages Department, Patiala 1969, 169.

24 Ibid, 168

25 Ibid, 162.

Qadir Yar presents realistic accounts of battles. He uses popular terms regarding Sikhs and their administration. He used the word *sarkar* for Ranjit Singh. The large Sikh empire is *mulk Punjab* for him. Also there are epithets like *singh, guru, tegh, panth, dera, sodhana, samadh, arzi, munshi, vakil* and *sulha*. By using the term *muddai* frequently for their Afghan enemies he shows his fellow-feeling for the Sikhs.

Some of Qadir Yar's comments are notable. Loss of Hari Singh's life was too much for Ranjit Singh.[26] None was to equal him as a protector of the Sikh empire.[27] He rose on two occasions. He showed his prowess by running over the Afghan hide-outs in Srikot hills around 1825. Secondly, he saved Jamrud in 1837 at the cost of his life.[28] The poet emphasizes the fact that delayed reinforcements from Lahore were injurious to the Sikh cause.[29] It was only because the news of Hari Singh's death was kept a secret that the troublesome Afghans did not feel encouraged to push the Sikhs back beyond the Attock.[30] Nevertheless, after the battle Dost Muhammad was convinced of the futility of his attempts against the Sikhs.[31]

Coming to his *Qissa Sohni Mahiwal* we find a different purpose. In his own words, there was a keen audience for love legends. That was why he wrote *Sohni Mahiwal* for the posterity to cherish his name.[32] He says that he wrote it at the request of his friends.[33] Here he has Muslim audience in mind. The story begins after the usual Muhammadan invocation to God. Qadir Yar's Sohni wears *burqa* (a veil with eyeholes).[34] She observes meekness and chastity prior to her

26 Qadir Yar, "Si-harfi Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa", 166.

27 Ibid, 167.

28 Loc cit

29 Ibid, 165.

30 Ibid, 166.

31 Ibid, 169.

32 Qadir Yar, "*Qissa Sohni Mahiwal*" in *Qadir Yar* (ed Gurcharan Singh), Punjab Languages Department, Patiala 1969, 66.

33 Ibid, 89.

34 Ibid, 66.

meeting Mahiwal. She is regular in her religious prayers.[35] Mirza Izzat Beg (Mahiwal) venerates Khawaja Khizr before crossing the Chenab river.[36] The same god comes to perform *janaza* (Muslim prayers in the name of the dead) of the two love martyrs.[37]

Qadir Yar's religious purpose can be better understood through his earliest work, the *Mi'raj Nama*, where he purely deals with his coreligionists. It appears that he wrote it with a view to emulate the Muslim poets who had been devoting at least one of their Punjabi compositions either to celebrate their prophets, saints and martyrs or to explain Islamic practices and principles.[38] His own devotion to Muhammad is clear. God was kind to him, writes Qadir Yar, in fulfilling his cherishd desire of writing *Mi'raj*, the wonder story of Muhammad's ascension to God.[39] The poet wished to save himself from the fire of hell through the intercession of Muhammad in the court of God.[40] In the *Mi'raj Nama*, Muhammad ranks above all. God himself arranges his nightly visit for He wants to show him His creation.[41] All the way he is met and helped by angels. He is introduced to his predecessors, like Ibrahim, Moses, Hazrat Daud, Sulaiman and Christ who stand in deference.[42] Even Adam, the great fore-father, requests him to convey his regrets to God.[43] Muhammad meets God after going through the seven skies. He is told of the professed purpose of his Lord. Indeed, Muhammad is to be his messenger in the world.[44]

Qadir Yar's purpose was both private and public. He is

35 Qadir Yar, "Qissa Sohni Mahiwal", 68.

36 Ibid, 70.

37 Ibid, 89.

38 Qadir Yar, "*Miraj Nama*" in *Qadir Yar* (ed Gurcharan Singh), 160.

39 Ibid, 92.

40 Ibid, 160.

41 Ibid, 154.

42 Ibid, 106-107.

43 Ibid, 111.

44 Ibid, 154.

explicit on the relevance of this work in Punjabi : It is more accessible to the commoners.[45] Like himself he wants his fellow men to earnestly believe in the visit of Muhammad to God.[46] The Prophet's ascension is authentic because it is mentioned in the Quran. One who does not believe in it is an infidel.[47] Since the *Mi'raj Nama* contains adoration of Muhammad, a mere reading of it can bring rewards.[48]

Among other things his *Mi'raj Nama* should be seen from the angle of the Muslim world-view. It was meant to be instructive in religious and moral terms. He has devoted nearly one hundred lines to the sinners of this world and the punishments awaiting them in hell. When Muhammad, assisted by Gabriel, reached the 'first sky' he saw persons receiving stone-blows for doing their *namaz* abruptly and performing improper obeisance.[49] Others were moving naked and starved because they had not only been unsympathetic to beggars but also dissuaded men from *zakat*.[50] Going ahead he found some men eating carcasses. This was because they had unlawfully and lewdly aspired for women.[51] There were breakers of trust loaded like donkeys and standing on their heads because they had usurped men's deposits.[52] Angels were cutting the moustaches and tongues of the sycophants and false deponents with the scissors of fire.[53] Muhammad was shown some guilty women also. The wives who had dominated their husbands were being severely beaten, their faces blackened, and their clothes burning.[54] There was one hanging from her hair simply because she had been fond of exposing

45 Qadir Yar, "Mi'raj Nama", 133.
46 Ibid, 160.
47 Ibid, 91.
48 Ibid, 160.
49 Ibid, 112.
50 Loc cit
51 Ibid, 113.
52 Loc cit
53 Ibid, 114.
54 Ibid, 115.

herself to strangers after her bath.[55] Moreover, all those women were being burnt who had loved men other than their husbands. Here it may be pointed out that Qadir Yar shows his own reaction against such people.[56]

In the first half of the nineteenth century some correlation between political, social and literary changes begins to make sense. Ranjit Singh did not rule to the disadvantage of any community. In contrast with the Mughals, the new rulers patronized Punjabi poetry. In addition to Hindus and Sikhs there were Muslim poets who composed romantic and war poetry for their new rulers. It should not surprise us to find poets putting themselves at the service of the ruling class.

It is highly significant that Qadir Yar views Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims as separate or distinct constituencies of readers. He writes separately for the three communities : the *Mi'raj Nama* and *Sohni Mahiwal* primarily for the Muslims; *Puran Bhagat*, for the Hindus; and *Si-harfi Hari Singh Nalua*, for the Sikhs. In the 1760s we find a partial awareness of Hindu readers in addition to Muslims in Waris Shah's *Hir*. But Qadir Yar definitely worked out this idea in a systematic manner.

Qadir Yar was a Musalman, and Sikhs were his patrons. But why does he provide a separate Hindu theme for the Hindus ? Was it not due to religious freedom and equal consideration given to the three communities by the Sikh state ? It appears that separate religious entities were strengthened rather than weakened under Maharaja Ranjit Singh. However, the developing idea of inter-communal cohesion cannot be ruled out. It is indicated in Shah Muhammad's Jangnama.[57] There were ample opportunities for a better understanding between the Hindus and Muslims. We may conclude that there were not many people who did think that they were all Punjabis.

55 Qadir Yar, "Mi'rai Nama", 133.

56 Ibid, 116.

57 Shah Muhammad, *Jangnama Shah Muhammad* (ed Kirpal Singh Kasel), Punjab Languages Department, Patiala 1970, 63, 78, 83, 86, 89, 90 & 97.

Kavi Gwal's Vijay Vinod

Sabinderjit Sagar*

The nineteenth century Punjab was rich in Hindi literature. About a hundred manuscripts have survived, including original works and copies of famous texts. Some of these works have even dates. Kavi Gval's *Vijay Vinod,*[1] a poetic work in *brij bhasha,* can be regarded as representative work of the period.

Kavi Gwal was major poet of the nineteenth century. He was a *bhat* (bard) of *bandijan* caste and claimed to be a Brahman (*vipra).*[2] He was born at Mathura around 1802.[3] His father's name was Sevaram.[4] Dayanidhi was his school teacher and his *kavya-guru* (poet-mentor) was Khushal Rai.[5] After his father's death the family moved to Brindaban.[6] We do not know much about his life in Uttar Pradesh. He was patronized by Maharaja Jaswant Singh of Nabha through the good offices of his *gurbhai* Kavi Gopal Singh Navin.[7]

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1 For this paper I have consulted the text of *Vijay Vinod* edited by Shamsher Singh Ashok in his book *Prachin Varan Te Jangname* S.G.P.C. Amritsar 1971.

2 Devindra Singh Vidyarthi, *Panjab Ke Darbari Hindi Kavion Ke Paripreksh Me Kavi Gwal Ke Kavitva Ka Adhyan,* Ph. D. Thesis, Panjab University, Chandigarh, 89.

3 Ibid, 90-91.

4 Ibid. 89.

5 Ibid. 91.

6 Loc cit

7 Ibid, 93

Kavi Gwal was honoured with the status of a court poet at Nabha. He was often sent as a royal emissary *(vakil)* to neighbouring ruling princes and aristocrats. In 1824 he was sent to Sardar Lehna Singh Majithia, governor of the Majha under Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The mission was sent by Kanwar Ranjit Singh, son of Maharaja Jaswant Singh of Nabha, to seek the help of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in a family dispute. At that time, the Kanwar was in conflict with his half-brother, Kanwar Devinder Singh. However, before the negotiations could take any positive turn Kanwar Ranjit Singh died.[8] Kavi Gwal stayed on with Lehna Singh Majithia.[9] In 1834 he was introduced to the Lahore Derbar.[10] Soon he acquired a prominent position among the Hindi poets of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.Gwal remained at Lahore even after the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.[11] In 1844, however, he migrated to the court of Raja Balbir Sen of Mandi.[12] But he did not remain long at Mandi. He returned to his native place.[13] He received royal patronage at Nabha from Maharaja Bharpur Singh.[14] He was invited by the Nawab of Rampur in 1865.[15] He died in August 1867 at the age of sixty-five.[16]

Kavi Gwal was a prolific poet. There are more than a dozen works to his credit. Almost all the forms of contemporary poetry were touched by him. *Hamir Hath* and *Vijay Vinod* are his historical *khand kavya*. Being a poet of *ritikal*, he wrote on rhetoric *(Rasikanand)*, poetics *(Sahitya Darpan* and

8 *Panjab Ke Darbari Hindi Kavion Ke Paripreksh Me Kavi Gwal Ke Kavitva Ka Adhyan*, 93.

9 From 1824 to 1834, the poet stayed at Amritsar as clearly evident from *Hamir Hath* and *Kavi Darpan*. Both the works were completed at Amritsar in 1824 and 1834, respectively : ibid, 94.

10 Loc cit

11 Ibid, 95.

12 Ibid, 98.

13 Ibid, 99.

14 *Prachin Varan Te Jangname*, 127.

15 Ibid, 95 & 103.

16 Ibid, 103.

Sahitya Bhukhan), Shringar rasa (Shringara Doha and *Shringara kabitt)* and on *riti (Ras Rang, Krishna Ju Ke Nakh Shikh* and *Dushan Darpan)*. Other important works by the poet are *Guru Pachisa, Jamna Lahri, Neh Nibas,* and a translated work entitled *Ishaq Lahar Daryav*.

Vijay Vinod is a historical balled in the form of a *khand kavya*. It was written in 1844 at the instance of Pandit Jalla, adviser to Raja Hira Singh, the *wazir* of Maharaja Dalip Singh.[17] It gives a brief account of Raja Dhian Singh's rise in the court of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The work deals primarily with the Lahore Darbar after the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Maharaja Dalip Singh's accession to the throne is given due importance. A significant point to be noted about Gwal's *Vijay Vinod* is that the poet is selective about the historical incidents. Only those incidents which have direct bearing on his master Raja Hira Singh are recorded by him. He views history in terms of personal values of friendship and enmity. For this, he never misses an opportunity to eulogize his master and to run down his rivals.[18] Because of his attach-

17 *Prachin Varan Te Jangname*, 130-31.

ਹੀਰਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਮਹਾਰਾਜ਼ਾ ਕੀ, ਲਖਿ ਇੱਛਾ ਅਨੁਰੂਪ ।
ਸ੍ਰੀ ਜਲਾ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਨੈ, ਕਿਯੋ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਅਨੂਪ ॥
ਸ੍ਰੀ ਜਲ੍ਹਾ ਮਹਾਰਾਜ ਨੈ, ਹੁਕਮ ਦਿਯੋ ਖੁਸ਼ਹਾਲ ।
ਜੋ ਲਹੌਰ ਲੀਲਾ ਭਈ, ਤੇ ਵਰਨੌ ਕਵਿ ਗ੍ਵਾਲ ॥
ਸ੍ਰੀ ਪੰਡਿਤ ਕੇ ਹੁਕਮ ਸੁਨਿ, ਉਪਜਯੋ ਹਿਯ ਮੈਂ ਮੋਦ ।
ਤਬ ਹਵਾਲ ਜਾਚਯੋ ਸਕਲ, ਰਾਚਯੌ ਬਿਜੈ ਵਿਨੋਦ ।
ਸੰਬਤ ਸਸਿ ਨਭ ਨਾਗ ਸਸਿ, ਸੰਬਤ ਸੁਕਲ ਸੁਮੋਦ ।
ਤਿੱਥਿ ਸੁ ਅਸ਼ਟਮਿ ਭੌਮ ਕੋ, ਪ੍ਰਗਟਯੋ ਬਿਜੈ ਵਿਨੋਦ ॥

18 Ibid, 204 & 205 :

ਲਖ ਲਖ ਲਾਨਤ ਰੇ ਅਤਰੂ ਅਭਾਗੇ ਤੋਹਿ,
ਕੁਟੰਬ ਕਟਾਇ ਕਟਯੋ ਕਾਇਰ ਕਸਾਈ ਹੈ ॥
ਭਈ ਖੁਸ਼ੀ ਸਭ ਨਗਰ ਮੈਂ, ਦੇਤ ਅਸੀਸ ਸਮਾਜ ।
ਨ੍ਰਿਪ ਹੀਰਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਚਿਰ ਜਿਯੋ, ਜਿਨ ਰਖ ਲੀਨੌ ਰਾਜ ॥

...

ਗਵਾਲਿ ਕਵਿ ਕਹੈ ਤੁਮ ਲਿਯੋ ਦ੍ਵੈ ਜਨੌ ਸੇ ਵੈਰ,
ਦੋਊਅਨ ਕੇ ਕਾਟੇ ਸੀਸ ਰੋਸ ਸੋਂ ਸਨਯੋਂ ਨਹੀਂ ।
ਜੈਸੇ ਕਛੂ ਬਦਲੋ ਪਿਤਾ ਕੋ ਆਪ ਲਿਯੋ ਆਜ,
ਤੈਸੇ ਪਰਸ ਰਾਮ ਹੂ ਸੋਂ ਲੇਤ ਹ੍ਵਾਂ ਬਨਯੋ ਨਹੀਂ ॥

ment to the *riti kavya* he quotes a *sawayya* from *Rasik Priya* of Kavi Keshav.[19] The emphasis is on eulogising Raja Dhian Singh, Hira Singh and Pandit Jalla.[20] The poet gives a comprehensive description of the Khalsa army and a vivid account of its battles.[21] Like medieval Hindi poet, he exploits myths to support his ideas. After the demise of the Maharaja, Indra vacated his Kingdom and Yamraj ran away and the people of Narak sought justice from the Maharaja.[22]

Though a major purpose of the poet is to magnify the deeds of his master and his father, yet he has a regard for the Maharaja. The poet begins with an invocation and the date of compilation. Then follows the glory of the Maharaja's reign. The poet is conscious of the political developments at the Lahore Darbar. We find the successors of the Maharaja depicted as puppets, virtually at the mercy of Raja Dhian Singh and his son.

Like the other works of the age, *Vijay Vinod* starts with invocation of the Hindu avtars. First of all the poet eulogises Sri Ram Chandra and then writes about the glory of Guru Gobind Singh.[23] The work is written in *brij* language, but words of Persian and English have been frequently used in a corrupt form.

Kavi Gwal exploits historical events by distorting facts in the interest of his purpose. The working of the institution

19 *Prachin Varan Te Jangname*, 183.

20 Ibid. 133, 158& 204-10.

21 Ibid. 159-60.

22 Ibid, 148 :

ਕੀਜੋ ਅਬ ਰਾਜ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਮਹਾਰਾਜ,
ਭਾਜਯੋ ਇੰਦ੍ਰ ਆਜ ਏ ਸਮਾਜ ਸਬ ਤੇਰੇ ਹੈਂ ॥

...

ਸੁਰਗ ਸਿਧਾਰਤ ਹੀ ਸਿੰਘ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਜੂ ਕੇ,
ਰਾਜਾ ਜਮ ਰਾਜ ਭਾਜ ਜਿਯ ਮੈਂ ਜਲੇ ਗਏ ।
ਨਰਕੀ ਸਮਾਜ ਪਰੇ ਝਗਰ ਸੁ ਬਯਾਜ ਕਰਿ,
ਆਇ ਮਹਾਰਾਜ ਪੈ ਫਿਰਾਦੀ ਉਛਲੇ ਗਏ ।

23 Ibid, 130.

of kingship and the administrative machinery of the Lahore Darbar are misrepresented. The poet also fails to give an analytical view of the disintegration of the Sikh kingdom. The fall of the Sikh kingdom has been depicted as a mere accident.

According to Kavi Gwal, Maharaja Ranjit Singh was created by God himself.[24] The Maharaja inherited all the virtues. He was the saviour of Hindu *dharma* (that is of Brahman, Veda, Cow and *tulsi*) [25] He was a just and benevolent ruler and his administration was good. During his rule, both the lion and the cow used to take water at the same well.[26] All these embellishments are used as devices to prepare a background of the emergence of Raja Dhian Singh and to make out how useful services were rendered by the Dogras. The efficiency of the administration of the Punjab is attributed to the capabilities of Raja Dhian Singh.[27] The qualities of the Maharaja are attributed to his prime minister too.[28]

Kavi Gwal makes out that the foundation of a kingdom depends on military strength. The prosperity of its people and the loyalty of the officials are necessary factors for the consolidation of the kingdom. These qualities are bulwark

[24] *Prachin Varan Te Jangname*, 131:

ਜਬ ਹਰਿ ਜੂ ਨੈ ਨਿਜ ਅੰਸ ਪ੍ਰਗਟਾਯੋ ਭਯੋ,
ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨਾਮ ਪਾਯੋ ਆਯੋ ਸੋ ਜਹਾਨ ਭਾਨ ।।

[25] Ibid, 131 :

ਗ੍ਵਾਲ ਕਵਿ ਕਹੈ ਬਿਪ੍ਰ ਬੇਦ ਗੋ ਤੁਲਸੀ ਧਿਪ੍ਰ,
ਛਿਪ੍ਰ ਭਯੋ ਤਿਨ ਹੂ ਕੇ ਰੱਛਕ ਪ੍ਰਤੱਛ ਮਾਨ ।
ਤੇਜਵਾਨ ਔ ਜਵਾਨ ਗਯਾਨਵਾਨ ਬੁੱਧੀਮਾਨ,
ਦਾਨ ਔ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾਨ ਕੋ ਬਹਾਦੁਰ ਮਿਹਰਬਾਨ ।।

[26] Ibid, 133 :

ਪਰਮ ਪ੍ਰਤਾਪੀ ਮਹਾਰਾਜੈ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ,
ਕੇਤੇ ਰੰਕ ਕਿਯੋ ਭੂਪ ਭੂਪੈ ਰੰਕ ਸਰ ਜੋ ।
ਚੋਰ ਧਾੜਵੀਨ ਕੀ ਨ ਰਾਖੀ ਹੈ ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨੀ ਕਹੂੰ,
ਸੇਰ ਗਾਈ ਪਾਨੀ ਪਿਯੈਂ ਮੇਲ ਇਕ ਮਰਜ਼ੀ ।

[27] Ibid, 137.

[28] Ibid, 205.

against foreign invasions.[29] The poet wants to suggest that the disintergation of Sikh rule was due to the disloyalty of the officials, factionalism in the army and the absence of competent central authority. Both Raja Dhian Singh and Hira Singh come up as the saviours of the Lahore Darbar.

Gwal had a peculiar attitude towards the British. His assessment of the Sikh-British relations is based on a single incident. According to the poet, Sardar Ajit Singh Sandhanwalia went to Calcutta to seek help against Sikh rule, but he was not brooked.[30] From this the poet generalizes about the Anglo-Sikh relations. The poet is emphatic on the amicable relationship between the Sikh rulers and the British authorities. Hs is saying that even if the Sandhanwalia Sardar had gone to England he would have returned empty handed.[31]

Gwal's attitude towards Muslims is equally noteworthy. Maharaja Ranjit Singh is depicted as a protector of Hindu *dharma* only. The poet says nothing about his Muslim subjects. The Maharaja gave a crushing defeat to the Muslim invaders from Kabul and Delhi.[32] Not a single Muslim official of the kingdom has been referred to in his work.

Vijay Vinod is a monument of literary and ethical values of the medieval period. The king is a divine authority.[33] Submission to the king should be absolute. Lack of faith in kingship proves to be ruinous.[34] The poet gives the example of the Sandhanwalia Sardar who were all killed since they were disloyal to the rulers.[35] The poet accuse Misar Beli Ram

29 *Prachin Varan Te Jangname*, 137.
30 Ibid, 174.
31 Ibid, 175 :

ਛਹੋ ਹੂੰ ਵਿਲਾਇਤ ਮੈਂ ਕਰਤੋਂ ਫਰਿਯਾਦ ਜਾਇ,
ਤੌਊ ਦੁਖ ਮਾਰਿ ਫਿਰ ਆਵਤੇਂ ਅਵੱਤਾ ਲੈਂ ।

32 Ibid, 131.
33 Loc cit
34 Ibid, 133.

ਜਿਨ ਕਿਯੋ ਵੈਰ ਤਿਨਿ ਫੈਰ ਮੁਖ ਭੇਰਾ ਕਿਯੋ,
ਖੇਹ ਕੇ ਚਹੇਯਾ ਦੇ ਨਜਰ ਦੀਨ ਧ੍ਰੈ ਬਚੇ ॥

35 Ibid, 204.

and Giani Gurmukh Singh of selfishness.[36]

The poet believes in predestination in history for which he uses the term fate (*bhagya*).[37] The poet has used the term *boli* as an incentive to chivalry and bravery.[38] This is traditional in medieval heroic literature. According to the poet an equally important obligation of the brave is to avenge family murder.[39]

The poet talks about social customs of contemporary Hindu society. He describes the funeral of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. At the time of Maharaja's cremation his legally wedded wives were made to sit on the head of the pyre but the slave-girls sat at his feet.[40] The attitude of the poet towards women is a reflection of the age. When Chand Kaur assumed the responsibility of controlling the affairs of the Lahore kingdom, the army showed an ill-feeling towards her.[41]

Omens were a significant influence on the minds of medieval men. When Raja Hira Singh attacked the Sandhan-

36 *Prachin Varan Te Jangname*, 186-8.

37 Ibid, 172 :

ਤਬ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਲਚਾਰ ਹੈ, ਕਹੀ ਕਿ 'ਖੁਸ਼ੀ ਤੁਮਾਰ।
ਭਾਗ ਲਿਖਯੋ ਸੋ ਭੋਗ ਹੌਂ, ਹਮਰੇ ਕਾ ਅਖਤਯਾਰ' ॥

38 Ibid, 166 :

ਬਾਂਟ ਦਈ ਦਾਰੂ ਅਰੁ ਗੋਲੀ ਝੋਲੀ ਅਨਤੋਲੀ,
ਬੋਲੀ ਮਾਰਿ ਕਹੀ—'ਦੇਖੈਂ ਕੌਨ ਸੋ ਉਛਾਹੀ ਹੈ'' ॥

39 Ibid, 205 :

ਗਵਾਲਿ ਕਵਿ ਕਹੈ ਤੁਮ ਲਿਯੋ ਦੈ ਜਨੋਂ ਸੇ ਵੈਰ
ਦੋਉਅਨ ਕੇ ਕਾਟੇ ਸੀਸ ਰੋਸ ਸੋਂ ਸਨਯੋਂ ਨਹੀਂ।
ਜੈਸੋ ਕਛੁ ਬਦਲੋ ਪਿਤਾ ਕੋ ਆਪ ਲਿਯੋ ਆਜ,
ਤੈਸੋ ਪਰਮ ਰਾਮ ਹੂੰ ਸੋਂ ਲੇਤ ਹਵਾਂ ਬਨਯੋ ਨਹੀਂ।

40 Ibid, 147 :

ਚੰਦਨ ਚਿਤਾ ਮੈਂ ਜਾਇ ਬੈਠੀ ਹੈ ਬਿਧਾਨ ਕਰਿ,
ਬਯਾਹਿਤਾ ਸਿਰ੍ਹਾਨੇ ਅਨਬਯਾਹੀ ਪਗ ਓਰ ਹੈ।

41 Ibid, 159 :

ਸਭੀ ਪਲਟਨੇ ਬਾਤ ਮਾਨੀ ਬੁਰੀ ਹੈ।
ਤਿਯਾ ਕੋ ਭਯੋ ਰਾਜ ਸਭ ਕੋ ਛੁਰੀ ਹੈ ॥

walias there were a number of good omens to guarantee victory.[42]

Gwal's aesthetics do not allow him to probe the factual world. He adopted the heroic literary tradition of Hindi literature, but not that of Punjabi *vars*. The Punjabi literature of the period is rich in heroic *vars*. But there is no impact on Gwal. He is more concerned with glorifying his master than with historical facts.

Vijay Vinod is nevertheless a significant Hindi source on the history of five years after the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. It cannot be looked upon as merely a literary work of a *riti* poet. The poet was an eyewitness of the downfall of the Sikh kingdom. He did consult a few court reports in writing his account. In fact, unlike the *ritikalin* poets, Kavi Gwal's treatment of the subject has a political purpose. His major concern is to under-emphasize the discontentment among the Khalsa army against his master Hira Singh and Pandit Jalla, by highlighting their loyalty and glorifying their deeds.

[42] *Prachin Varan Te Jangname*, 192-3.

The Importance of Persian

V. S. Suri*

The bicentenary celebrations of Maharaja Ranjit Singh are a fit occasion for taking stock of the source material on this stirring period in Punjab history. It is more so on account of the fact that for a long time the only source of information on the subject were the British records or writings of the officials of the East India Company. These accounts are one sided and represent the British point of view.

The discovery of historical writings in Persian of the period of Sikh rule was earlier confined to some chronicles which were mostly inspired by the British. Because of their limited interest in the subject the British themselves attached very little importance to the study of this period, though the reason generally given by them was paucity of original indigenous sources.

Through the efforts of Sita Ram Kohli, Khalsa Darbar records came to light and two volumes of the catalogue thereof appeared in the twenties of the present century. Very little effort seems to have been made to explore any further original sources for the obvious reason that these were in the possession of some prominent families and chiefs in the Punjab. They were generally hesitant to publicise them for fear of losing them.

The writer fully realised the practical difficulties in this task of exploration of source material in private custody because, as Alexandra Research Scholar under the Punjab

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University, Lahore, he was assigned this task of search for materials in private possession. It was difficult to persuade the non-official owners even to show their family records and other materials. His labours, however, produced some unknown and untapped historical manuscripts full of useful information on the history of the Punjab. The original sources thus discovered were expected to provide the basis for writing a systematic and authentic history of the Punjab. With the dawn of independence in 1947, and the association of the writer with the Records Office of the Punjab Government, he brought from Lahore the famous Khalsa Darbar records as our share of the assets of the Anarkali's Tomb Records Office, Lahore. He also managed to explore and collect original sources of Punjab history from the family collections of some of the outstanding Muslims who had migrated to Pakistan. The systematic search from the houses of some of the notable families in our part of the Punjab yielded a rich harvest of rare manuscripts and documents. Particular mention must be made of an outstanding collection from the assets of Rajab Ali of Jagraon who had functioned as the native agent under the British. Besides Khalsa Darbar records, hundreds of manuscripts and documents have been collected and preserved at the Punjab State Archives.

It must, however, be deeply regretted that the historical writings in Persian which have been explored and collected with great effort have not been properly utilised. The real difficulty lies in the fact that teaching of Urdu or Persian in the Punjab has been discontinued and a new generation has come up without any knowledge of the language in which are written the available sources of Punjab history. Since there has been no demand from the scholars, there has been no enthusiasm for the preparation of catalogues. The original materials, it will be recognized, are a basic source of history. Unless such basic materials are consulted, a gulf will be created between the scholar and the source material in a language with which he is not familiar. The reader will have no means of checking up inaccurate, tendentious or partial interpretations of our past.

Medals of Maharaja Ranjit Singh

Mohan Singh*

Maharaja Bhupinder Singh of Patiala (1900-1938) had procured a huge collection of medals and decorations from Messers Spink and Son, London. There are two medals in this collection which relate to Maharaja Ranjit Singh. One of these is the 'Legion de Honor' type which he had introduced at the instance of his French officers. The other belongs to the 'Order of Ranjit Singh' type.

The former is a silver medal. On its upper side there is a silken ribbon in orange and light green strip of colours to which is suspended an engraved silver plate from which rays come out like that of the diamond called *koh-i-noor*, or the mountain of light. This is supported with the actual medal with a small round gold bust of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in relief work in profile, posture, showing his right side as often portrayed by the native artists. He is wearing a helmet and several decorations including a pearl necklace and ear-rings of which he was very fond. On the upper right and left sides of the medal, there are three silver enamelled plates in white, red and blue colours. In between, there is a bull on either side which is exquisitely carved; according to anatomy it is life-like and in the charging mood. Below the bust, eagle and sword are depicted. The bull has been the insignia of royalty since the days of the Mauryan emperors. The eagle was an insignia of royalty in Europe. The sword indicates that Ranjit Singh won territory by force of arms.

* Maharaja Ranjit Singh Museum, Ram Bagh, Amritsar.

On the reverse side of the medal, just behind the bust is inscribed 'Maharaja Ranjit Singh Bahadur Wali-i-Punjab' in Persian characters. On the light-grey enamelled round spaces the names of Kashmir, Attock, Peshawar, Mankera and Multan are also there. The recipient of the medal was supposed to have taken part in the conquest of these territories. Only General Hari Singh Nalwa took part in all the battles. It is possible that this medal was granted to him just after the conquest of Peshawar in 1834.

The second medal in the Medal Gallery at Patiala is of gold, bearing the inscription : 'The Auspicious Star of the Panjab, the Earl of Auckland'. In all probability it was presented by Maharaja Ranjit Singh to Lord Auckland on his visit to Lahore in 1838. It is an enamelled star composed of diamonds and emeralds set in gold and having ten points, like rays, five large and five small. On the five large points, there is a big diamond encircled by four small diamonds. The five small points contain a diamond and an emerald. In the centre of the medal, there is a very small round miniature painting of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in profile showing his right side. He is holding a lily flower in his left and a rosary in his right hand. He is wearing a yellow robe, a helmet over an orange coloured turban and the *koh-i-noor* along with two stones of lesser value on his right arm. He is having a sword and a black shield on his back. He is sitting on a carpet, beautifully painted in detail by the artist. On the back of the medal, there are exquisite floral designs in enamel, and inlay work in different colours. This medal is a unique example of the splendour and grandeur of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's court. It speaks of the high skill of craftsmanship in the Punjab, and reveals the artistic taste and aesthetic sense of the Maharaja.

A clarification may be made at this point. A medal has been reproduced by Sita Ram Kohli in his *Maharaja Ranjit Singh* under the title 'Kaukab-i-Iqbal-i-Punjab' or the 'Star of Punjab's Prosperity'. He has acknowledged the source by

mentioning 'the courtesy of Maharaja Patiala'. But he has not mentioned to whom this medal was granted. Dr Fauja Singh has also reproduced a medal in his *Military System of the Sikhs* as 'The medal of the order of high honour instituted by Maharaja Ranjit Singh'. He has mentioned neither the source nor the person to whom it was granted. That he got it photographed from Sita Ram Kohli's book is evident from the light and shade, angle and position of the cord attached to the medal in the reproduction. According to these two authors, this medal was of the highest order as it was studded with diamonds only. But the golden medal of the Medal Gallery has five small emeralds. Nevertheless, it can be presumed that this medal was of the highest order. Maharaja Ranjit Singh would have granted only a first class medal to the Earl of Auckland, the highest British authority in India to visit Lahore.

This medal is quite similar in shape to the one which the Maharaja granted to Captain C. M. Wade, who often visited his court as the Political Agent at Ludhiana and was very friendly to Ranjit Singh. The difference in these two medals is the angle of the small points, which are straight in one, and pointed and slightly tilted in the other. The sizes and shapes of the diamonds and emeralds are also different. There is a cord of red colour attached to the one presented to Auckland and a ribbon attached to the other.

In the *Umdat ut-Tawarikh* there is reference to a letter of Lord Auckland received at Lahore on 21 April, 1838. According to this letter, the medals given to Henry Fane, Wade and Mackeson could not be worn by them in the absence of permission from their king. However, Osborne was allowed to retain the 'Ranjit Star of the Punjab' out of the presents received from Maharaja Ranjit Singh. It was a diamond and enamelled star with the portrait of the Maharaja in the centre. Besides these British officers, the Maharaja gave medals to his native and European officers. Its importance can be judged from the fact that on the dead body of General

Allard were placed both the 'Star of the Punjab' and the 'Legion de Honor'. An 'order' awarded by the Maharaja could be withdrawn at the displeasure of the Maharaja.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh was probably the first Indian ruler to introduce the system of granting medals. He granted medals to his sons and distinguished courtiers as well as to the British in authority. The latter had to take permission from the king of England to wear the medals. The profuse use of diamonds and emeralds bespeaks of the economic prosperity of the kingdom of Lahore. These medals can safely be considered among the most valuable, rare and unique visual sources of the history of the Sikh kingdom. They reveal on the one hand that Maharaja Ranjit Singh was not averse to borrowing features of European tradition if it suited his purposes, and on the other, their bestowal on British dignitaries shows how jealous the Maharaja was of his sovereign status.

The Nature of Ranjit Singh's Kingship

S.K. Bajaj*

Because of the confusion created by the early British historians and the acceptance of their views by the Indian historians of the present century, it is necessary to analyse the nature of kingship under Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The British historians could not comprehend the nature of Ranjit Singh's kingship, his system of administration and the rationale of the whole system of his state. They looked upon the kingdom of Lahore as the creation of Ranjit Singh's personality and his military force. They saw no system in his administration.

However, there were two European writers who suggest by implication that Ranjit Singh's efforts had a kind of design. According to Cunningham, he evolved a 'more or less intelligent design, to give unity and coherence to diverse elements, to mould the increasing Sikh nation into a well ordered state or commonwealth'. In an attempt to characterise Ranjit Singh's state, Vincent Smith writes that it was 'neither a traditional Indian territorial state and monarchy nor merely a dictatorship of one community over another'. Yet so powerfully was the strain of personality, intellect and military genius set by the contemporary European writers that even recent Indian scholars have unconsciously fallen into that trap. N.K. Sinha, for example, views Ranjit Singh as a man of superior capacity and enterprise, a man of destiny and a man who established an independent military monarchy.

There is a remarkable consistency in Ranjit Singh's political, social, religious and administrative policies. We do not see

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any major shift in them at any period of his reign. If these policies had not been based on certain well established traditions and had emanated from his personal vision of the historical situation, then the contingency of pragmatism would have certainly brought about variations for the sake of compromise. If we accept that he was representative of a certain tradition or traditions, it is imperative for historians to find out those links to know him in proper historical perspective. Speculation based on available information can help us in constructing a hypothesis and theoretical framework. We can gainfully identify some of the institutions of Ranjit Singh and trace their origin in one or another tradition : the ancient Indian tradition, the semi-agrarian communal tradition of the Punjab or the Khalsa tradition.

We know that Ranjit Singh was an autocrat, not limited by constitutional controls, but there were many practical checks on his sovereignty. He conceived his functions not in terms of legislation, but of protection. His duty to provide protection to people involved not only protection from outside invasion, but also the preservation of order in society. His primary responsibility was to keep all classes in their proper places of social hierarchy and status and to provide them proper social situation to improve their moral and material conditions. The accounts of Indian writers clearly show that Ranjit Singh gave protection to his subjects and always worked for their welfare. Though powerful, he did not rule with repression; popular as he was, he seems to have followed the old dictum that the *raja* pleases his people, arouses reverence rather than terror; the better the king, the greater his power to protect; the greater the power to protect, the greater was his strength, valour and prowess.

The duty of protection was not confined to maintenance of *status quo*. It involved positive duties, such as developing irrigation, relieving famines and generally supervising the economic life of the kingdom. Instances are not wanting to show that Ranjit Singh did all this when the British, on the other

side of the Satlej, had not evolved the policies like famine relief. He protected the peasant, the trader and the artisan. He practised the principle of ideal kingship. He held open *darbars*, listened to the grievances of the people. He sided not with his officers but with his people and never let an official go free if he committed an offence. While performing 'sacrifices' pertaining to various religions, he was neither acting contrary to the tenets of Sikh religion nor was he being superstitious. He was just performing rites, rituals and sacrifices as a king of all his subjects. It was in accordance with the prescribed duties of a king. Ranjit Sing's religious policy highlights the fact that the political power of the king incorporates the idea of service to the people, their welfare, protection of their lives, goods and souls; he was not to function as the agent of a community or a religion.

Closely related to the duty of protecting people was the king's right to punish offenders. His system of justice and award of punishment has received undue share of criticism. It was neither whimsical nor designed to serve his economic needs. Ranjit Singh's affiliation to a semi-agrarian communal organization is reflected in his attitude to the administration of justice. Firstly, justice included both private and public crimes and was based not on rights but on obligations. Secondly, punishment was awarded in terms of fines. Lastly, capital punishment was never awarded; the severest kind of punishment was excommunication. The absence of hierarchical courts and written laws has caused tremendous confusion for the European and modern Indian scholars. At the community level, customs and traditions operated as laws and at the state level, it was the responsibility of the king and his administration to check various communities from coming into conflict, and to encourage the maintenance of social harmony.

The basis of the authority of Ranjit Singh is another problem intimately connected with the idea of kingship. It would be wrong to assume that the basis of his authority was military or money. They, of course, were essential to maintain

authority. Though he ruled in the name of the Khalsa. His authority, in the technical sense, did not orginate from the Khalsa. Nobility operated only as an agency to exercise his authority. The basis of his authority was much wider than is generally suggested by historians. He strictly adhered to the traditional concept of kingship as the father and protector of the people. The basis of his authority rested on the allegiance of the people which evolved with time like a living organism, truly indigenous and unique.

We may conclude, therefore, that the kingship of Ranjit Singh was rooted in the traditional contractual theory. The mystical elements were incongruously combined but they were suppressed to a great degree by the Khalsa tradition and the powerful Jat tradition of the Punjab.

Trade and Industry Under Maharaja Ranjit Singh

Kulbir Singh*

There were numerous trading centres in the kingdom of Lahore during the early nineteenth century. Some of these were important for foreign trade, like Amritsar, Lahore, Leiah and Multan. Besides these, there were other centres of local or regional importance, like Srinagar, Peshawar, Dera Ghazi Khan, Dera Ismail Khan, Bannu, Jehlum, Pind Dadan Khan, Hafizabad, Khushab, Gujrat, Gujranwala, Sialkot, Batala, Dera Baba Nanak and Kangra. Trading centres were directly or indirectly connected with one another. Ranjit Singh gave all facilities and protection to the caravans of traders and merchants. Their caravans frequently carried goods between Multan and Sindh, between Dera Ghazi Khan and Multan and between Multan and Lahore which was well connected with Amritsar, Peshawar and Srinagar.

There was a constant interchange of all sorts of merchandize throughout the kingdom of Lahore, ranging from the humblest commodity to the rarest luxury, carried by caravans to Kabul, Qandahar, Kunduz, Herat, Balkh, Bukhara, Mashad and Bombay, to markets in Afghanistan, Central Asia and British India. Ranjit Singh encouraged commercial intercourse with Tibet and China as well. Most of the goods imported were meant for the nobility. Ranjit Singh himself used to replenish his stock of horses by importing them from the neighbouring countries.

Trade was monopolized by certain communities of the Punjab, mainly by Khatris, Aroras, Bhatias and Suds among

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the Hindus, and by Khojas and Parachas among the Muslims. There were also petty shop-keepers, pedlars and brokers to facilitate trading activities. All merchants had to pay custom and transit duties. No distinction was made between the articles of daily use and luxury goods. However, Ranjit Singh introduced relatively moderate rates. He also gave instructions to his governors that merchants should not be harrassed on account of custom duties. The merchandise was transported on ponies, camels, bullock-carts, mules and donkeys. Water routes were also used by numerous types of boats.

The medium of exchange in the kingdom of Lahore was by and large the Nanak Shahi rupee. In the region of Hazara and in Kashmir, barter was also prevalent. Other currencies were also used in commercial exchange, like the Shah Shuja rupee in Dera Ghazi Khan which was valued at 1 anna and 4 pice less than the Nanak Shahi rupee. An 'old rupee' was prevalent in Kashmir; its value was 4 annas less than that of the Nanak Shahi rupee. There are references also to Hari Singh's rupee in Kashmir. To facilitate trade, there was a system of credit and banking. The merchants could borrow capital either on the condition of paying interest or giving a share in the profits. The *hundi* system was prevalent in the kingdom. There were bankers of influence at all important centres.

In contemporary literature, there is ample evidence to show that many industries of considerable importance were developed under Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The most important of these were textiles, metal work, and leather work. The manufacture of textiles, which included woollens, silks and cottons, was the biggest industry during this period. Kashmir alone imported shawl-wool worth 7,50,000 rupees annually from Ladakh, and its annual output was estimated at 35,00,000 rupees. The yearly revenue from this industry was 18 lakhs of rupees. Multan used to import 7,000 maunds of raw silk from Bukhara and Turkistan. Though cotton was extensively grown in the Punjab, it was imported from the Malwa region as well for the purpose of manufacture.

In textile, woollen industry was the most important. Numerous varieties of shawls, like Pala, Hais, Zangri and Dhour, and numerous other articles like carpets, blankets, rugs, *namdas*, tents, *lois* and wrappers were manufactured for the rich people and the aristocracy. Maharaja Ranjit Singh used to give woollen products, especially Kashmiri shawls which were celebrated throughout the world, frequently as presents. He gave all facilities and shelter to the famine-stricken artisans of Kashmir to promote shawl industry in Amritsar. The other centres of woollen industry in the kingdom were Bhera, Dera Ismail Khan, Gujrat, Dera Ghazi Khan,Batala, Hoshiarpur, Kangra and Lahore.

The quality of silk and cotton products was excellent. The cotton chintz and the silk *atlas* of Multan were well known throughout the kingdom of Lahore. There were some other varieties of silk also, like the striped *gulbadan*, the plain *daryai*, satin, *tassar* and *lungi* silk. The manufactures in cotton consisted of coarse cloth, carpets, bed-covers, *phulkaris*, turbans, *susi*, *gazzi* and muslin. The chief centres of both these textiles were Amritsar, Multan, Lahore, Peshawar, Bhera, Jehlum, Batala and Sialkot. Ranjit Singh encouraged silk Industry by giving in present the cloth manufactured at Multan. The cotton industry was encouraged by the use of cloth for the uniforms of an army of 70,000.

Next in importance to textiles, were a number of industries based on metal work. By far the most important metal industry was the weapen industry under Maharaja Ranjit Singh. For manufacturing arms, iron was mainly used. It was largely available in Mandi, Suket, Kangra, Bannu, Hazara and Kohat. But iron for arms was also imported. The important centres of this industry were Lahore, Amritsar, Shujabad, Jammu, Srinagar and Multan. The manufacture of guns and matchlocks was mainly handled by Kashmiri craftsmen under the skilled supervision of Sardar Lehna Singh Majithia, Faqir Nur-ud-din and Dr Honigberger Maharaja Ranjit Singh established royal *karkhanas* at Lahore and Amritsar where skilled artisans were given the handsome wage of 2 rupees per day, while a labourer got half a rupee. He conferred special honours on Lehna Singh,

Nidhan Singh and Gulab Singh for promoting this industry. iron was largely used also for agricultural implements and for domestic articles like utensils, safes and oil lamps. The main centres of these manufactures were Sialkot, Gujrat, Jullundur and Gujranwala. Iron goods were beautifully demascened by ironsmiths and other craftsmen at Sialkot.

There are references to ornaments of gold and silver prepared by goldsmiths for both men and women. Gold was found at Kangra, Rawalpindi, Jehlam, Bannu and Hazara, while silver was found from the Rupi mine in Kulu. Besides ornaments, utensils of gold and silver and syringes were also made. Silver was largely melted for Nanak Shahi coins. Brass and copper industry was limited to the manufacture of domestic utensils. These metals were imported from Kabul, or obtained from Kangra and Kashmir. The main articles of manufacture were *gagars* and *thalis*. The chief centres of manufacture were Gujranwala, Pind Dadan Khan, Sialkot, Lahore and Amritsar. The ornamental work done at Hoshiarpur was exceptionally good.

There were several other industries in the Punjab during the early nineteenth century. The large number of plain and illustrated manuscripts and other documents that have come down to us from the period leave no doubt about the existence of paper industry in the Punjab. Both Kashmiri and Sialkoti paper was in use. Paper was manufactured in Multan also. Wood-work was an important industry. Timber imported from the hills was used for buildings, boats and carriages and for furniture. Articles of several kinds were made from wood, like walking ticks, combs, toys, boxes, bows and arrows, saddles for camels and musical instruments. They were beautifully decorated and ornamented. The main centres of wood work in the Punjab were Peshawar, Attock, Wazirabad, Pind Dadan Khan, Jhelum, Muzaffargarh, Khushab, Lahore, Amritsar and Multan. The leather industry used to derive its raw materials from the sheep, goats, cows and buffaloes. Water-carriers, scabbards and saddles were manufactured besides shoes. Maharaja Ranjit Singh encouraged this industry with his interest in the saddles of horses and belts for the army men. These were

extensively manufactured at Sialkot and Lahore. Saltpetre was produced and used for the manufacture of fireworks, gun powder, and ammonia (*naushadar*). Its main centres were Gujrat and Jandiala near Amritsar. Some other industries were basket making, pottery, rope making and mat making.

As regards the organization of industry, production was mainly carried on by artisans in their houses or small workshops. They were working either independently or financed by merchants. Maharaja Ranjit Singh established royal *karkhanas* for large-scale industrial activities. He used to visit these *karkhanas* to check the roduction of weapons, leather and textile work. Salt was a monoply of the state. On the whole, Maharaja Ranjit Singh tried to promote industry and trade by creating certain facilities and the conditions of safety and protection as well as by taking direct and personal interest in both.

Urban Development Under Maharaja Ranjit Singh

Kirpal Singh*

Trade, manufacture and government have been the functions of urban communities. Urbanization therefore is an important subject of historical study. This aspect of the reign of Ranjit Singh has received little attention from the historians. New towns were founded; old urban centres were given a new lease of life; and trade and industry was encouraged by the Maharaja. The former prosperity of Lahore, Srinagar and Peshawar, for example, was revived. The forts like Phillaur and Attock encouraged people to settle down in the vicinity, giving rise to nuclei of towns. Similarly, many administrative centres attracted people to settle down as urban communities. Urbanization thus became an important phenomenon in the days of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

We may have a little closer look at some of the urban centres of the days of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in order to understand the process of urbanization. Wazirabad was a flourishing town in the early 18th century. But its population was dwindling before the establishment of Sikh rule. It was repopulated by Sardar Gurbakhsh Singh and his son Jodh Singh before it was taken over by Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1809. Wazirabad flourished under the administrators of the Maharaja, particularly under Avitabile from 1829 to 1835. As laid out by him Wazirabad was parallelogram in shape

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enclosed by an irregular brick wall. Within it is a broad and straight *bazar* running from end to end and crossed at right angles by minor streets, also straight and of good width, the whole being marked by an almost entire absence of the tortuous *culs de sac* so general in the towns of purely native design'.

Ganesh Das recognized the importance of Wazirabad in the *Char Bagh-i-Punjab* in his own characteristic way. 'In the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh many eminent persons laid out orchards and gardens outside the city. The garden of Kirpa Ram Chopra adjoining the city is well known. The garden of Diwan Thakur Das Chopra who served Maharaja Gulab Singh of Jammu is also beautiful. Similarly the gardens of Kishan Kaur Bania Lorindi Shah Arora, son of Bhanga Shah, Khushal Shah, Khushal Singh Jamadar and Uttam Singh Chhachhi are in a flourishing state. The Sarai of Wazirabad in which the Maharaja used to stay is a beautiful place. It has a pleasing garden and a high tower'. Because of its importance as a city, Wazirabad was made the headquarters of a district by the British in 1849, though this decision was revised in 1852 and its administrative status was reduced.

Another important town which owed its flourishing position to Maharaja Ranjit Singh and his family was Gujranwala. Founded by Charhat Singh, Gujranwala had become more populous under Mahan Singh who persuaded the inhabitants of nearby Sayyidnagar to shift to this place. Maharaja Ranjit Singh remained at Gujranwala till 1799 when he made Lahore his capital. But he did not lose interest in his old capital. Gujranwala continued to flourish under his administrators, particularly under Hari Singh Nalwa who himself belonged to the town. Charles Hugel has recorded the account of his meeting with Hari Singh Nalwa in 1836. The Baradari of Hari Singh was 'a good specimen of Sikh architecture'. According to William Barr, it was one of 'the prettiest Eastern homes'. It consisted of three storeys each containing a room about sixteen feet square, the lower ones enclosed by

a veranda. A range of fountains extended close to the extreme front. The garden of Hari Singh Nalwa abounded in fine fruit trees, especially the orange imported from Malta by General Avitabile. Maharaja Ranjit Singh took lot of pains to rehabilitate the deserted countryside around, which ultimately contributed to the prosperity of Gujranwala.

In the case of Amritsar, Maharaja Ranjit Singh unified nearly a dozen different parts to bring the entire populace under one administration. He raised the political status of Amritsar by making it the summer capital of his kingdom. The courtiers of Maharaja Ranjit Singh were equally keen to develop different parts of the city. Several new localities came up, like Katra Bhai Sant Singh Giani, Dhab Bhai Vasti Ram, Katra Moti Ram, Katra Kanwar Kharak Singh, Katra Hakiman, Katra Nihal Singh Atariwala, Katra Karam Singh, Katra Mit Singh Padhania, Katra Kanwar Sher Singh, and Katra Fateh Singh Kalianwala. Jacquemont, who visited the city on the 8th of March in 1831, observed that Amritsar was the largest city in the Punjab. 'Its area can be reduced to about 10,000 metres. I put the population between 100,000 to 200,000 There is more movement and more life in Amritsar than in any other town in British India and it is the first city in which I have seen obvious signs of expansion. The *bazars* are very numerous in general and the houses of merchants are three or four storeys high, the front being whitened and covered with coarse mythological pictures'.

Ganesh Das takes notice of the great prosperity of the city of Amritsar. 'Today there is no other city in the whole of the Punjab which is as large as Amritsar. Merchants from all countries have come to Amritsar and settled here. Many Khatris of Lahore have adopted Amritsar as their home'. The *sahukars* of Amritsar, according to him, were extremely rich. In the reign of Ranjit Singh Rama Shah Bania was the most distinguished amongst them. He was not alone. Amritsar was the abode of numerous rich merchants as the biggest commercial city of the kingdom. According to Hugel, Amritsar was

'the richest city in the northern India'. It was larger than Lahore. 'The wealth of the whole Punjab comes collected in it and the great merchants have made it their abode'. Amritsar was the most bustling of all the cities of the Punjab: 'in every street the most beautiful productions of India are seen exhibited for sale'.

There were certain historical and geographical factors which account for the rapid development of Amritsar in the commercial and industrial fields during the first half of 19th century. The conquest of Kangra and Kashmir brought these areas within the range of accessibility. The wool and shawls of Kashmir found a large market in Amritsar. The varied products of the hills began to be exchanged for the produce of the plains at Amritsar. Because of the famine in Kashmir in the early 1830s, a number of skilled workers migrated to Amritsar, bringing with them instruments and techniques to develop shawl industry and the manufacture of thick warm blankets. Shawls, carpets, silk and cotton fabrics began to be exported from Amritsar to other parts of India, notably to Hyderabad, Lucknow and the states of Rajputana. The shawls of Kashmir were also exported from Amritsar.

In the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh the city of Multan was next in importance only to Amritsar and Lahore. It was an important centre of commerce and banking which gave it 'a pre-eminence over all other towns in Western India. Diwan Sawan Mal, as the governor of the province of Multan from 1821 to 1844, added much to its prosperity which ultimately contributed to the prosperity of the city of Multan. Alexander Burnes who visited Multan on the 15th of June in 1831 observed that the city of Multan was upwards of three miles in circumference, surrounded by a dilapidated wall and overlooked on the north by a fortress of strength. 'It contains a population of about 60,000 souls one-third of whom may be Hindus. The rest of the population is Muhammadan, for though it is subject to the Seikhs, their number is confined to the Garrison which does not exceed 500 men. Many of the

houses evidently stand on the ruins of others, they are built of burnt brick and have flat roofs. They sometimes rise to the height of six storeys. The inhabitant are chiefly weavers and dyers of cloth'. Multan was known for its silks of all colours, 20 to 120 rupees per piece.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh took special interest in encouraging the silk trade of Multan. According to Burnes, he 'has with much propriety encouraged this manufacture since he captured the city and by giving no other cloth at his court has greatly increased their consumption, they are worn as sashes and scarfs by all Seikh Sardars. They are exported to Khorasan and India and duties levied are moderate'. The route by Jaisalmer and Bikaner was chosen in preference to that of Sind. The trade of Multan was on a larger scale than that of Bahawalpur. There were forty money-changers in the city of Multan.

We may be sure that urban development got a good deal of impetus from Maharaja Ranjit Singh's interest in promoting trade and industry throughout his dominions.

Morphology Of Lahore

H. K. Naqvi*

From 1400 to 1700 under the Delhi Sultans and the Great Mughals, Lahore had gained steadily in populousness, extent and embellishments. While strategic compulsions accounted for the continuity of the town, the promotion of its commercial intercourse depended on other factors. Set in a fertile hinterland of the basin of the upper Sind river system, Kabul passes on the western outer fringe, Gangetic plain in its east, the provinces of Kashmir and coastal Sind in its north and south, both accessible through the navigable river Ravi, Lahore enjoyed an unrivalled commercial centrality. Thus, during periods when free flow of goods in all directions was possible, as in the 16th and 17th centuries, the progress of the town was remarkable. However, since the latter half of the 17th century the silting of Sind port hampering overseas accessibility to foreign markets, together with the blocking of the Kabul route, brought the Lahore trade to a stand still. The caravans bringing the much needed precious metals, silk yarn and horses among other commodities of minor importance were in the 18th century diverted to the Qandhar route, a contingency that undoubtedly contributed in deepening the economic crisis at Lahore.

At its largest the city had a diametre of nearly 16 miles, encompassing at least 37 *guzars*. By the mid-18th century its size was fast diminishing, till it was taken over by the Sikh rulers. In the last quarter of the 18th century the new masters

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of the city set out to rejuvenate Lahore. They built mansions and fortresses, sold plots of land to potential inhabitants and encouraged craftsmen and traders to settle down. The plurality of decisions of the ruling *sardars*, however, rendered the emergent recovery pattern lacking in coherence, co-ordination and evenness.

It was in this historical perspective that Ranjit Singh assumed supremacy over the city and made his own contribution to its revival. Lahore became a capital town, though of a smaller kingdom. In 1813, Ranjit Singh secured the city by repairing and rebuilding its old wall and provided double ditches around each gate. He built a *baradari* and laid out the *hazuribagh*. He also attended to the Shalamar Garden of Emperor Shah Jahan. The laying out of luxurious gardens assumed quite a general character and over four dozen lush gardens adorned the city. The elite built their mansions around the town. *Sarais*, wells, *baolis*, reservoirs, temples and markets came up all over the city.

The lay out of Lahore around 1830 was circular in shape. The River Ravi flowed past its north-western corner. The city wall was of about three *kos*. The northern segment of the city wall was substituted by the northern fort wall. The gates in the city wall were Masti, Khizri, Yaki, Delhi, Akbari, Lahori, Shah Alami, Mochi, Mori, Bhati, Taksali, Kabuli and Multani.

A vertical street running from the Khizri Darwaza down to about a mile upto Shah Alami Darwaza divided the city into two unequal portions. The criss cross of streets and lanes in the eastern wing suggests a congested concentration. The extreme north-eastern, southern and western portions apear to have been occupied in a haphazard manner by the elite. The Lakhi Bazar and Begampura were located in this area.

While the establishment of peace and order and the natural potentialities of the region enabled the city to be on its feet again, the time was too brief to allow the city to regain the glory it had enjoyed at the height of its prosperty under the Mughals.

Punjabi Section

ਹਾਸ਼ਮ ਸ਼ਾਹ

ਜੋਗਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਰਾਹੀ*

ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਦੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਵਿਚ ਹਾਸ਼ਮ ਨੂੰ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਕਾਲ ਦਾ ਇਕ ਸਿਰਕਰਦਾ ਕਵੀ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਵੀ ਦਸਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਸਦਾ ਦੇਹਾਂਤ ਇਕ ਲੰਮੀ ਉਮਰ ਭੋਗਣ ਪਿੱਛੋਂ ਹੋਇਆ। ਉਸਦੇ ਵਾਰਸਾਂ ਪਾਸ ਪਏ ਇਕ ਕਲਮੀ ਕੁਰਸੀਨਾਮੇ ਅਰਥਾਤ ਖ਼ਾਨਦਾਨੀ ਪੱਤਰੀ ਦੇ ਆਧਾਰ ਉੱਤੇ ਉਸਦੇ ਦੇਹਾਂਤ ਦੀ ਤਾਰੀਖ਼ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਮੌਤ ਤੋਂ ਚਾਰ ਵਰ੍ਹੇ ਬਾਅਦ 1843 ਈ. ਵਿਚ ਨਿਸ਼ਚਿਤ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ ਹੈ। ਏਸੇ ਕੁਰਸੀਨਾਮੇ ਦੇ ਆਧਾਰ ਉੱਤੇ ਹੀ ਉਸਦਾ ਜਨਮ-ਕਾਲ 1735 ਈ. ਨਿਸ਼ਚਿਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਜੇ ਇਹ ਤਾਰੀਖ਼ਾਂ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਤੱਥ ਦੀਆਂ ਸੂਚਕ ਹਨ ਤਾਂ ਹਾਸ਼ਮ ਦੀ ਆਯੂ 108 ਵਰ੍ਹੇ ਦੇ ਕਰੀਬ ਬਣਦੀ ਹੈ। ਕੁਝ ਹੋਰ ਖੋਜਕਾਰਾਂ ਨੇ ਹਾਸ਼ਮ ਦਾ ਜਨਮ-ਕਾਲ 18ਵੀਂ ਸਦੀ ਦਾ ਤਕਰੀਬਨ ਅੱਧ ਦਸਿਆ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਹਾਲਤ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਹਾਸ਼ਮ ਦੀ ਉਮਰ 90 ਵਰ੍ਹਿਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਉਪਰ ਪਹੁਚ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ। ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ 1799 ਈ. ਵਿਚ ਲਾਹੌਰ ਉੱਤੇ ਕਬਜ਼ਾ ਕਰਨ ਦੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਹਾਸ਼ਮ ਦੀ ਉਮਰ 50 ਅਤੇ 64 ਵਰ੍ਹੇ ਦੇ ਦਰਮਿਆਨ ਦੱਸੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ।[1]

ਹਾਸ਼ਮ ਦੇ ਜਨਮ-ਕਾਲ ਬਾਰੇ ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਨਿਰਣੇ ਜੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਤੌਰ ਉੱਤੇ ਦਰੁਸਤ ਹਨ ਤਾਂ ਸੰਭਵ ਹੀ ਹਾਸ਼ਮ 18 ਵੀਂ ਸਦੀ ਦੇ ਅੰਤ ਤਕ ਆਪਣੀ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰੀ ਕਾਵਿ-ਰਚਨਾ, ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰਮੁੱਖ ਸਥਾਨ ਉਸਦੇ ਕਿੱਸਿਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਦੋਹੜਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਹੈ[2], ਸੰਪੂਰਣ ਕਰ ਚੁਕਾ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ। ਬੁਢਾਪੇ ਦੀ ਅਵਸਥਾ ਵਿਚ ਰੁਮਾਂਚਕ ਸੁਭਾਵ ਵਾਲੀ ਕਾਵਿ-ਰਚਨਾ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਣਾ ਦੇ

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[1] ਹਾਸ਼ਮ ਦੇ ਜਨਮਕਾਲ ਤੇ ਆਯੂ ਬਾਰੇ ਚਰਚਾ ਲਈ ਵੇਖੋ ਪਿਆਰਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਪਦਮ, "ਹਾਸ਼ਮ-ਰਚਨਾਵਲੀ", ਸਰਦਾਰ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਭਵਨ, ਪਟਿਆਲਾ, 1969 (ਦੂਜਾ ਸੰਸਕਰਣ), 11-12. ਹਾਸ਼ਮ ਦੀ ਰਚਨਾ ਬਾਰੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਹਵਾਲੇ ਇਸ ਸੰਗ੍ਰਹਿ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਜਾਣਗੇ। ਅੱਗੇ ਹਵਾਲੇ ਲਈ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਸਿਰਫ਼ "ਹਾਸ਼ਮ-ਰਚਨਾਵਲੀ" ਲਿਖਿਆ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ।

[2] ਹਾਸ਼ਮ ਦੀ ਰਚਨਾ ਦੇ ਵੇਰਵੇ ਲਈ ਵੇਖੋ "ਹਾਸ਼ਮ-ਰਚਨਾਵਲੀ", 38-47.

ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਹੋਣ ਦੀ ਸੰਭਾਵਨਾ ਘੱਟ ਤੇ ਹੰਢ ਜਾਣ ਦੀ ਸੰਭਾਵਨਾ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਹੈ ।[3]

ਹਾਸ਼ਮ ਦੀਆਂ ਰਚਨਾਵਾਂ ਦੇ ਜੋ ਖਰੜੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਤਕ ਪਹੁੰਚੇ ਹਨ ਉਹ 19 ਵੀਂ ਸਦੀ ਪੂਰਵਾਰਧ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਦੇ ਨਹੀਂ । ਦੂਜੇ, ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਸਮਾਂ ਹਾਸ਼ਮ ਦੀ ਇਕ ਬਜ਼ੁਰਗ ਕਵੀ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਮਾਨਤਾ ਦਾ ਸਮਾਂ ਸੀ ।[4] ਸ਼ਾਇਦ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੋ ਗੱਲਾਂ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੀ ਉਸਨੂੰ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਕਾਲ ਦਾ ਕਵੀ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ।

ਮੁਸ਼ਕਿਲ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਹਾਸ਼ਮ ਦੀਆਂ ਰਚਨਾਵਾਂ ਦੇ ਮੂਲ ਖਰੜੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਨਹੀਂ । ਇਸ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਰਚਨਾ-ਕਾਲ ਨੂੰ ਨਿਸ਼ਚੇ ਨਾਲ 19 ਵੀਂ ਸਦੀ ਦੇ ਪੂਰਵਾਰਧ ਵਿਚ ਨਿਰਧਾਰਿਤ ਕਰਨਾ ਸੰਭਵ ਨਹੀਂ । ਰਚਨਾਵਾਂ ਦੀ ਅੰਦਰਲੀ ਗਵਾਹੀ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਵੀ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੀ ਝਲਕ ਨਹੀਂ ਮਿਲਦੀ । ਇਸ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਖੋਜਕਾਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਦੇ ਰਾਜਸੀ ਕਾਲ ਦੀ ਝਲਕ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਨਜ਼ਰ ਆਈ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਪੁਰਾਣੀ ਮੁਗ਼ਲ ਰਾਜ-ਸੱਤਾ ਦੇ ਵਿਗਠਨ ਦੀ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਰਾਜ-ਸੱਤਾ ਦੇ ਅਜੇ ਖੰਡਿਤ ਅਵਸਥਾ ਵਿਚ ਹੋਣ ਕਾਰਣ ਅਰਾਜਕਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਅਨਿਸ਼ਚਿਤਤਾ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਸੀ । ਹਾਸ਼ਮ ਦੀਆਂ ਰਚਨਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਸਿੱਧੇ ਤੌਰ ਉੱਤੇ ਨ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਘਟਨਾਵਾਂ ਦਾ ਅਤੇ ਨ ਹੀ ਉਸ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਦੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਘਟਨਾਵਾਂ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਖ਼ਾਸ ਜ਼ਿਕਰ ਹੈ । ਪਰ ਉਹ ਆਪਣੇ ਕਿੱਸਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਪਾਤਰਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਸਥਿਤੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਵਿਚ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਹਾਲਤਾਂ ਦਾ ਵਰਣਨ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਪਰਦੇ ਵਿਚ ਉਸਦੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੀ ਵਿਵਸਥਾ ਦਾ ਪਰਤੌ ਗੁੱਝਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਰਹਿੰਦਾ । ਇਹ ਪਰਤੌ 18 ਵੀਂ ਸਦੀ ਦੇ ਅਧੋਗਤੀਸ਼ੀਲ ਮੁਗ਼ਲ ਰਾਜ ਦੀ ਦਸ਼ਾ ਨਾਲ ਤਾਂ ਜੋੜਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ, ਪਰ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਨਾਲ ਜੋੜਨਾ ਕਠਿਨ ਜਾਪਦਾ ਹੈ । ਇਹ ਪਰਤੌ ਕੁਝ ਬ੍ਰਿਤਾਂਤਕ ਟਿੱਪਣੀਆਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਮਿਲਦਾ ਹੈ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਕਵੀ ਸਮਾਜ ਦੇ ਕੁਝ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਵਰਗ-ਪਾਤਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਆਲੋਚਨਾ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਸਾਡੇ ਮਨ ਵਿਚ 18 ਵੀਂ ਸਦੀ ਦੇ ਦੂਜੇ ਅੱਧ ਦੇ ਵਿਗੜੇ ਹੋਏ ਹਾਲਾਤ ਦੀ ਤਸਵੀਰ ਖੜੀ ਕਰ ਦੇਂਦੇ ਹਨ ।

ਅਜਿਹੀਆਂ ਬ੍ਰਿਤਾਂਤਕ ਟਿੱਪਣੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਪ੍ਰਤਿਨਿਧ ਰੂਪ ਕਿੱਸਾ ਸ਼ੀਰੀਂ ਫ਼ਰਹਾਦ

[3] ਪਿਆਰਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਪਦਮ, "ਹਾਸ਼ਮ- ਰਚਨਾਵਲੀ", 21 : 'ਮੇਰੀ ਜਾਚੇ ਹਾਸ਼ਮ ਦਾ ਕਾਵਿ-ਰਚਨਾ-ਕਾਲ 18ਵੀਂ ਸਦੀ ਹੈ, 19ਵੀਂ ਸਦੀ ਨਹੀਂ । ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ 1799 ਈ. ਵਿਚ ਲਾਹੌਰ ਉੱਤੇ ਕਬਜ਼ਾ ਕਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਉਹ ਆਪਣੇ ਕਿੱਸੇ ਆਦਿ ਲਿਖ ਚੁਕਾ ਸੀ । 65 ਵਰੇ ਦੀ ਉਮਰ ਪਿੱਛੋਂ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਕਿੱਸੇ ਆਦਿ ਲਿਖਣ ਦੀ ਕੀ ਲੋੜ ਸੀ ਤੇ ਨਾ ਹੀ ਬੁਢੇਪੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਦਾ ਇਹ ਮਜ਼ਮੂਨ ਹੈ । ਕੁਝ ਦੋਹੜੇ ਸ਼ਾਇਦ ਲਿਖੇ ਹੋਣ' ।

[4] ਮਾਨਤਾ ਤੋਂ ਸਾਡਾ ਭਾਵ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਰਾਜ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਮਿਲੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਰਸਮੀ ਸਰਪਰਸਤੀ ਤੋਂ ਨਹੀਂ, ਲੋਕ-ਮਨ ਵਿਚ ਮਿਲੀ ਵਡਿਆਈ ਤੋਂ ਹੈ । ਜਿੱਥੋਂ ਤਕ ਹਾਸ਼ਮ ਦੇ ਰਾਜ-ਕਵੀ ਹੋਣ ਦੀ ਰਵਾਇਤ ਦਾ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਹੈ, ਖੋਜੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਬਾਰੇ ਲਿਖੇ ਗਏ ਤਜ਼ਕਰਿਆਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਇਸ ਬਾਰੇ ਕੋਈ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਸਬੂਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਮਿਲ ਸਕਿਆ ।

ਕੀ ਬਾਰਤਾ ਵਿਚ "ਪਿਛਲੇ ਔਰ ਇਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਕੀ ਬਾਰਤਾ" ਦੇ ਸਿਰਲੇਖ ਹੇਠ ਮਿਲਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ 'ਬਾਰਤਾ' ਅਧੀਨ ਹਾਸ਼ਮ 'ਜੇਹਾ ਵਖਤ ਤੇਹਾ ਸਭ ਕੋਈ' ਦੇ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਅਧੀਨ 'ਪਿਛਲੇ' ਅਤੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੇ ਸ਼ਾਇਰਾਂ, ਫ਼ਕੀਰਾਂ, ਆਸ਼ਕਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਖ਼ਸਲਤ ਤੇ ਕਿਰਦਾਰ ਦਾ ਤੁਲਨਾਤਮਕ ਮੁੱਲਾਂਕਣ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ।[5] ਸਾਡੇ ਲਈ ਇਸ ਮੁੱਲਾਂਕਣ ਵਿਚ ਫ਼ਕੀਰਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਚਿਤ੍ਰਣ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਧਿਆਨ ਦੇਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਚੀਜ਼ ਹੈ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਇਹ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਤੇ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਕ ਖੇਤਰ ਦੀ ਪਛਾਣੀ ਜਾ ਸਕਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਵਾਸਤਵਿਕਤਾ ਦਾ ਸੂਚਕ ਹੈ। ਪਿਛਲੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੇ 'ਸਾਹਿਬ ਤਖ਼ਤ' ਹਾਸ਼ਮ ਦੀ ਨਜ਼ਰ ਵਿਚ 'ਦਰਦਵੰਦਾਂ' ਦੀ 'ਮਲੂਮ' ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੇ, 'ਖ਼ੌਫ਼ ਅਦਾਲਤਿ ਵਾਲੇ', 'ਪੁੱਤ ਭਤੀਜਾ' ਦੇ ਜ਼ੋਰ-ਜਬਰ ਨੂੰ ਲਗਾਮ ਪਾਉਣੇ ਵਾਲੇ, 'ਰੱਬ ਦੇ ਖ਼ੌਫ਼' ਵਾਲੇ, 'ਦਿਲ ਵਿਚ ਫ਼ਕਰ' ਕਮਾਉਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਤੇ 'ਦੁਖੀਆ' ਦਾ 'ਵਾਂਗੁ ਤਬੀਬਾਂ' 'ਦਾਰੂ' ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਸਨ।[6] ਪਰੰਤੂ :

ਕਹੁ ਹੁਣ ਹਾਲ ਹਕੀਕਤ ਹਾਸ਼ਮ, ਹੁਣ ਦਿਆਂ ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹਾਂ ਦੀ।
ਜ਼ੁਲਮੋਂ ਕੂਕ ਗਈ ਅਸਮਾਨੀਂ, ਦੁਖੀਆ ਰੋਜ਼ ਦਿਲਾਂ ਦੀ।37।
ਆਦਮੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਸੂਰਤਿ ਦਿਸਦੇ, ਰਾਕਸ਼ ਆਦਮਖ਼ੋਰੇ।
ਜ਼ਾਲਮ ਚੋਰ ਪਲੀਤ ਜ਼ਿਨਾਹੀ, ਖ਼ੌਫ਼ ਖ਼ੁਦਾਓਂ ਕੋਰੇ।38।[7]

ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਪੰਕਤੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਮਿਲਦੀ ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਤਸਵੀਰ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਦਿਆਲੂ ਰਾਜ-ਤੰਤਰ ਦੇ ਬਿੰਬ ਦੇ ਵਿਪਰੀਤ, ਪਰ 18 ਵੀਂ ਸਦੀ ਦੇ ਦੂਜੇ ਅੱਧ ਦੇ ਪਤਨਸ਼ੀਲ ਸ਼ਾਸਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਖ਼ਾਸੇ ਦੇ ਮੁਤਾਬਕ ਹੈ। ਕਿੱਸੇ ਵਿਚ ਇਕ ਹੋਰ ਥਾਂ ਫਰਹਾਦ ਨੂੰ ਸ਼ੀਰੀਂ ਤੋਂ ਤੋੜਨ ਦੀ ਸਾਜ਼ਸ਼ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਅਮੀਰਾਂ ਵਜ਼ੀਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਚਰਿਤਰ-ਚਿਤ੍ਰਣ ਵਿਚ ਹਾਸ਼ਮ ਜ਼ੋਰਾਵਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਲੱਗਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਖ਼ੁਸ਼ਾਮਦੀ ਬਖ਼ੀਲਾਂ ਦੀ ਸ੍ਵਾਰਥ-ਨੀਤੀ ਦਾ ਵਰਣਨ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਵਰਣਨ ਵੀ 18 ਵੀਂ ਸਦੀ ਦੇ ਦੂਜੇ ਅੱਧ ਵਿਚ ਢਹਿੰਦੀ ਮੁਗ਼ਲਸ਼ਾਹੀ ਦੇ ਰਾਜਸੀ ਕਿਰਦਾਰ ਦਾ ਹੀ ਪਰਤੌ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਤ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ :

ਅਸਲੋਂ ਜ਼ੋਰਾਵਰ ਨੂੰ ਲਗਦੇ, ਕੌਣ ਵਧੀਕ ਪਿਆਰੇ।
ਧ੍ਰੋਹੀ, ਚੁਗਲ, ਬਖ਼ੀਲ, ਬਿਦਰਦੀ, ਝੂਠ ਕਮਾਵਣਹਾਰੇ।331।
ਤੱਕਣ ਬੁਰਾ ਬਿਗਾਨਾ ਹਰਦਮ, ਖ਼ੂਨ ਪਰਾਏ ਨ੍ਹਾਉਣ।
ਬੋਲਣ ਝੂਠ ਕੁਸ਼ਾਮਦ ਕਾਰਣ, ਜ਼ੋਰਾਵਰਾਂ ਰੀਝਾਉਣ।332।
ਸੋਈ ਬਣੇ ਮਰਾਤਬ ਵਾਲਾ, ਕਾਬਲਕਾਰ ਜਹਾਨੀ।
ਹਿਰਫ਼ਤ ਦਗ਼ਾ ਬਖ਼ੀਲੀ ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ, ਗਿਣਤੀ ਰਹੇ ਬਿਗਾਨੀ।333।

[5] ਵੇਖੋ "ਹਾਸ਼ਮ-ਰਚਨਾਵਲੀ", 149-151.

[6] ਉਹੀ, 150-51.

[7] ਉਹੀ, 151.

ਗਊਗਾ ਹਿਰਸ ਗਰੂਰਤ ਮਸਤੀ, ਦੁਨੀਆ ਨਾਉਂ ਇਸੇ ਦਾ।
ਅੱਖੀਂ ਨੱਕ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਛੁ ਹੋਊ, ਬਣਿਆ ਜਿਸਮ ਕਿਸੇ ਦਾ।334।[8]

ਹਾਸ਼ਮ-ਰਚਨਾਵਲੀ ਦੇ ਸੰਪਾਦਕ ਨੇ ਅਮੀਰਾਂ-ਵਜ਼ੀਰਾਂ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਫ਼ਰਹਾਦ ਲਈ ਤਜਵੀਜ਼ ਹੋਈਆਂ ਸਜ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਦਾ ਹਵਾਲਾ ਦੇਂਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮੁਗਲਾਂ ਦੇ ਜ਼ਮਾਨੇ ਦੀਆਂ ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧ ਸਜ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਦਸਿਆ ਹੈ ਜੋ 'ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਤਾਂ ਆਮ ਵਰਤੀਂਦੀਆਂ' ਸਨ, ਪਰ 'ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਮੇਂ...ਬੰਦ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤੀਆਂ ਗਈਆਂ ਸਨ'।[9] ਉਦਾਹਰਣ ਵਜੋਂ :

ਸੂਬੇਦਾਰ ਅੰਬੀਰ ਚੁਫ਼ੇਰੇ, ਹਾਕਮ ਹਫ਼ਤ ਹਜ਼ਾਰੀ।
ਨੇਜ਼ੇ ਤੀਰ ਤੁਫ਼ੰਗ ਦਿਖਾਉਣ, ਖਿਚ ਖਿਚ ਪੈਣ ਕਟਾਰੀ।232।

ਆਖਣ ਇਕ ਗਡਾਓ ਧਰਤੀ, ਤੀਰੀਂ ਲੇਖੁ ਕਰਾਓ।
ਦੂਜੇ ਕਹਿਣ ਜਲਾਦਾਂ ਆਖੋ, ਸੂਲੀ ਚਾਇ ਚੜ੍ਹਾਓ।233।

ਨਿਮਕ ਹਰਾਮ ਬੇਅਦਬ ਅਜੇਹਾ, ਉਲਟੀ ਖੱਲ ਲਹਾਓ।
ਇਕ ਇਕ ਕਹਿਣ ਕਮੀਨੇ ਤਾਈਂ, ਆਤਸ਼ ਵਿਚ ਜਲਾਓ।234।[10]

ਉਕਤ ਸੰਪਾਦਕ ਨੇ ਹੀ ਹਾਸ਼ਮ ਦੇ ਅਲੰਕਾਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਕੱਚੀ ਸਾਮਗ੍ਰੀ ਵਿਚ ਜੰਗੀ ਪਿਛਵਾੜੇ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨਤਾ ਵੱਲ ਸੰਕੇਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਸਾਮਗ੍ਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਤਤਕਾਲੀਨ ਮਾਰ-ਧਾੜ ਦੇ ਮਾਹੌਲ ਦਾ ਪਰਿਣਾਮ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਹੈ।[11] ਇਹ ਪੱਖ ਵੀ ਸੱਤਾਧਾਰੀ ਵਰਗ ਤੇ ਉਸ ਦੀ ਸਰਪਰਸਤੀ ਦੇ ਜਾਚਕ ਵਰਗ ਦੇ ਚਿਤ੍ਰਣ ਤੋਂ ਮਿਲਦੇ ਪਰਤੌ ਨੂੰ ਪੁਸ਼ਟ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਦੰਭੀ ਸ਼ੇਖਾਂ, ਫ਼ਕੀਰਾਂ ਤੇ ਉਲਮਾਵਾਂ ਦਾ ਵਿਅੰਗਾਤਮਕ ਚਿਤ੍ਰਣ ਵੀ 'ਜੇਹਾ ਵਖਤ ਤੇਹਾ ਸਭ ਕੋਈ' ਦੇ ਇਸ ਸਿਲਸਿਲੇ ਦੀ ਹੀ ਕੜੀ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਰਾਜਸੀ ਮਾਰ-ਧਾੜ ਤੇ ਆਪੋ-ਧਾਪੀ ਦੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਵਿਚ ਵਰਤਮਾਨ ਮਜ਼ਹਬੀ ਗਿਰਾਵਟ ਦਾ ਪਤਾ ਦੇਂਦੀ ਹੈ :

ਜ਼ਾਹਦ ਲੋਕ ਪੁਰਾਣੇ ਬੁਜ਼ਰਕ, ਬੈਠੇ ਵਿਚ ਮਸੀਤੀਂ।
ਦਹ ਦਹ ਸੇਰ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਤਸਬੇ, ਭਰੇ ਸੰਦੂਕ ਤਵੀਤੀਂ।155।

ਇਕ ਇਕ ਮਰਦ ਅਜੇਹੇ ਆਹੇ, ਸਾਦਕ ਵਿਚ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ।
ਸਾਰੀ ਉਮਰ ਮਸੀਤੋਂ ਬਾਹਰ, ਪਏ ਨ ਪੈਰ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ।156।

ਮੁਹਰੇਦਾਰ ਸਿਰੀਂ ਦਸਤਾਰਾਂ, ਸਬਜ਼ ਪੇਰਾਹਨ ਖ਼ਾਸੇ।
ਸੂਰਤ ਖ਼ਿਦਰ ਕਿਤਾਬਾਂ ਬਗਲੀਂ, ਦਸਤਿ ਸੁਨਹਿਰੀ ਆਸੇ।157।

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[8] "ਹਾਸ਼ਮ-ਰਚਨਾਵਲੀ", 176.

[9] ਉਹੀ, 27.

[10] ਉਹੀ, 168.

[11] ਉਹੀ, 28.

ਇਕ ਫ਼ਰਹਾਦ ਬਿਰਹੁੰ ਦਾ ਜ਼ਖ਼ਮੀ, ਤੀਰ ਜਿਗਰ ਵਿਚ ਰੜਕੇ ।
ਦੂਜਾ ਪਏ ਬਲਾਇ ਮੁਲਾਣੇ, ਕਲਮ ਦਵਾਤਾਂ ਫੜਕੇ ।161।

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ਨਾਕਸ ਨੀਚ ਨਫ਼ਸ ਦੇ ਤਾਲਿਬ, ਬਣਨ ਮਸਾਇਕ ਬਾਤੀਂ ।
ਕੌਡੀ ਦਾਮ ਕਿਤੋਂ ਹੱਥ ਆਵੇ, ਢੂੰਡ ਇਹੋ ਦਿਨ ਰਾਤੀਂ ।182।[12]

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ਤਸਬੀ ਬਹੁਤ ਭਵਾਵਣ ਕਸਬੀ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾਮ ਫ਼ਰੇਬ ਵਿਛਾਇਆ ।
ਕਰ ਕਰ ਗਿਆਨ ਸੁਣਾਉਣ ਸਿਆਣੇ, ਨਾ ਇਤਿ ਬਿਧ ਸ਼ੇਖ ਕਹਾਇਆ ।17।[13]

ਹਾਸ਼ਮ ਆਪਣੇ ਕਿੱਸਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਦੋਹੜਿਆ ਵਿਚ ਬਾਰ-ਬਾਰ ਇਸ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ 'ਗਮ ਦਾ ਘਰ' ਕਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਜਿੱਥੇ 'ਦਮ' ਦਾ ਕੋਈ 'ਭਰਵਾਸਾ' ਨਹੀਂ ਤੇ ਜਿੱਥੇ ਮੌਤ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਸਮੇਂ 'ਬੇਮੁਰਾਦ' ਜੀਵਨ ਦਾ ਅੰਤ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ :

ਹਾਸ਼ਮ ਜਾਣ ਗ਼ਨੀਮਤ ਦਮ ਨੂੰ ਭਲਾ ਕਿਆ ਭਰਵਾਸਾ ਦਮ ਦਾ ।54।[14]

ਮਨੁੱਖ ਦੀਆਂ ਖ਼ੁਸ਼ੀਆਂ, ਸੁਾਸਥ ਤੇ ਸੰਸਾਰਕ ਸੱਤਾ ਦੀ ਅਨਿਸ਼ਚਿਤਤਾ ਤੇ ਅਸਥਿਰਤਾ ਦਾ ਭਾਵ ਹਾਸ਼ਮ ਦੀ ਰਚਨਾ ਦਾ ਇਕ ਵਿਆਪਕ ਭਾਵ ਹੈ । ਵੈਸੇ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਭਾਵ ਮੱਧਕਾਲੀਨ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਦੀ ਬੜੀ ਪੁਰਾਣੀ ਦਾਰਸ਼ਨਿਕ ਰੂੜ੍ਹੀ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਹੈ । ਪਰੰਤੂ, ਜਿਹੜੀ ਗੱਲ ਹਾਸ਼ਮ ਦੀ ਹਾਲਤ ਵਿਚ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਤਤਕਾਲੀਨ ਰਾਜਸੀ ਹਾਲਾਤ ਦਾ ਸਿੱਟਾ ਬਣਾਉਂਦੀ ਹੈ ਉਹ ਹੈ ਇਸ ਵਿਚ ਸ਼ਾਮਿਲ ਅਹਿਸਾਸ ਦੀ ਤੀਖਣਤਾ । ਹਾਸ਼ਮ ਸਮੁੱਚੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਕਿੱਸਾ-ਕਾਵਿ ਵਿਚ ਅਹਿਸਾਸ ਦੀ ਤੀਖਣਤਾ ਵਾਲਾ ਇਕ ਨਵੇਕਲਾ ਸ਼ਾਇਰ ਮੰਨਿਆਂ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ । ਸਿਰਫ਼ ਰੂੜ੍ਹੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਅਨੁਸਰਣ ਵਿਚ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਤੀਖਣਤਾ ਸੰਭਵ ਨਹੀਂ । ਰੂੜ੍ਹੀ ਜਦੋਂ ਵਾਸਤਵਿਕ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜ ਕੇ ਨਵਾਂ ਮਹੱਤਵ ਗ੍ਰਹਿਣ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਓਦੋਂ ਹੀ ਉਹ ਗ੍ਰਹਿਣ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਵਿਚ ਅਹਿਸਾਸ ਦੀ ਤੀਖਣਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਚੰਡ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ । ਹਾਸ਼ਮ ਦੀ ਆਪਣੀ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਵੱਲ ਪ੍ਰਤਿਕ੍ਰਿਆ ਰੂੜ੍ਹੀਗਤ ਤਾਂ ਜ਼ਰੂਰ ਹੈ, ਪਰ ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਤਿਕ੍ਰਿਆ ਦੀ ਭਾਵੁਕ ਤੀਖਣਤਾ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਵਾਸਤਵਿਕਤਾ ਦੀ ਕਠੋਰਤਾ ਦਾ ਅਲਾਮਤੀ ਪ੍ਰਗਟਾਵਾ ਵੀ ਹੈ ।

ਹਾਸ਼ਮ ਕਾਵਿ ਦੇ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਲਈ ਇਹ ਅਲਾਮਤ ਬੜੀ ਵਡਮੁੱਲੀ ਚੀਜ਼ ਜਾਪਦੀ ਹੈ । ਇਸਦਾ ਕੇਵਲ ਮਹੱਤਵ ਇਹ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਿ ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਹਾਸ਼ਮ ਦੇ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਕਾਲ ਦਾ ਕਵੀ ਹੋਣ ਦੀ ਥਾਂ 18ਵੀਂ ਸਦੀ ਦੇ ਦੂਜੇ ਅੱਧ ਦਾ ਕਵੀ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਹੋਣ ਦਾ ਸੰਕੇਤ ਮਿਲਦਾ ਹੈ । ਇਸਦੀ ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਵੀ ਜ਼ਿਆਦਾ ਅਹਿਮੀਅਤ ਹਾਸ਼ਮ ਦੀ ਕਵਿਤਾ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਹੋਣੀਵਾਦ ਦੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਮੂਲ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਣ ਦੇ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਵਿਚ ਹੈ ।

12 "ਹਾਸ਼ਮ-ਰਚਨਾਵਲੀ", 161-63.

13 'ਦੋਹੜੇ', "ਹਾਸ਼ਮ-ਰਚਨਾਵਲੀ", 196.

14 ਉਹੀ, 202.

ਹਾਸ਼ਮ ਨੂੰ 'ਕਾਮਿਲ ਇਸ਼ਕ' ਅਤੇ 'ਦਰਦ' ਦਾ ਕਵੀ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ।[15] ਉਸਦੇ ਕਿੱਸਿਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਦੋਹੜਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਸਰਸਰੀ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਹੀ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਸੂਤਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਆਸਾਨੀ ਨਾਲ ਗ੍ਰਹਿਣ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਦੋਹੜਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਇਹ ਸੂਤਰ ਕਾਵਿਕ ਵਿਰੋਧਾਭਾਸਾਂ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਕਲ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਂ ਪ੍ਰਤੱਖ ਟਿੱਪਣੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਪੱਧਰ ਉੱਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਕਿੱਸਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਬ੍ਰਿਤਾਂਤ-ਰੂਪਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਕਲ ਵਿਚ। ਉਸਦੇ ਕਿੱਸਿਆ ਦੇ ਨਾਇਕ ਅਤੇ ਨਾਇਕਾਵਾਂ 'ਕਾਮਿਲ ਇਸ਼ਕ' ਦੇ 'ਦਰਦ' ਦੇ ਨਮੂਨੇ ਹਨ ਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ 'ਸਿਦਕ' ਦੀ ਦ੍ਰਿੜ੍ਹਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਅਡੋਲਤਾ ਦਾ।[16] ਸਤਹੀ ਪੱਧਰ ਉੱਤੇ ਇਹ ਮਜਾਜ਼ੀ ਇਸ਼ਕ ਦੀਆਂ ਕਹਾਣੀਆਂ ਹਨ, ਪਰ ਰੂਪਕ ਦੀ ਪੱਧਰ ਉੱਤੇ ਇਹ 'ਕਾਮਿਲ ਇਸ਼ਕ' ਦੇ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ-ਸਦਾਚਾਰਕ ਪ੍ਰਤਿਮਾਨ ਦੀ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਹਨ।

ਹਾਸ਼ਮ ਆਪਣੇ ਕਿੱਸਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ 'ਕਾਮਿਲ ਇਸ਼ਕ' ਦੇ ਨਾਇਕਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਨਾਇਕਾਵਾਂ ਦੀ ਟੱਕਰ 'ਲਿਖੇ ਲੇਖ' ਅਰਥਾਤ ਅੰਨ੍ਹੀ ਹੋਣੀ ਨਾਲ ਦਰਸਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਜਿਸਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਬਲਤਾ ਦਾ ਸਿੱਟਾ ਇਸ ਟੱਕਰ ਦਾ ਨਿਬੇੜਾ ਦੁਖਾਂਤ ਵਿਚ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ।[17] ਹਾਸ਼ਮ ਦੇ ਕਈ ਸ਼ਾਹਿਤ-ਆਲੋਚਕਾਂ ਨੇ ਉਸਦੇ ਦੁਖਾਂਤ-ਅਨੁਭਵ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਾਜਕ ਚੇਤਨਾ ਤੋਂ ਸੱਖਣਾ ਅਤੇ ਯਥਾਰਥ-ਅਨੁਭਵ ਵਿਚ ਊਣਾ ਤੇ ਰੂੜ੍ਹੀਵਾਦੀ ਦਰਸਾਇਆ ਹੈ। ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀ ਤੋਂ ਵੇਖਿਆਂ ਹਾਸ਼ਮ ਦਾ ਅੰਨ੍ਹੀ ਹੋਣੀ ਦਾ ਸੰਕਲਪ ਉਸਦੀ ਸਮਾਜਕ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਦੀ ਨਿਰਾਸ਼ਾ ਦਾ ਹੀ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਰੂਪਾਂਤ੍ਰਣ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਤ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਸਾਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਰੂਪਾਂਤ੍ਰਣ ਦੇ ਸੂਚਕ ਹਵਾਲੇ ਉਸਦੇ

[15] 'ਹੀਰ ਰਾਂਝੇ ਕੀ ਬਿਰਤੀ', "ਹਸ਼ਮ-ਰਚਨਾਵਲੀ", 84 :

ਕਿੱਸਾ ਆਖਣਾ ਆਸ਼ਕਾਂ ਕਾਮਲਾਂ ਦਾ।
ਇਹ ਵੀ ਬੰਦਗੀ ਹੈ ਧੁਰੋਂ ਨਾਲ ਆਈ।1।

. . .

ਕਿੱਸਾ ਬਹੁਤ ਬੇਦਰਦ ਦਾ ਕੁਝ ਨਾਹੀਂ।
ਦਰਦਮੰਦ ਦੀ ਮਾਰਦੀ ਬਾਤ ਥੋੜੀ।2।

[16] "ਹਾਸ਼ਮ-ਰਚਨਾਵਲੀ", 118:

ਇਕ ਦਿਰ ਸ਼ੋਕ ਸੋਹਣੀ ਨੂੰ ਆਖੇ, ਹਾਰ ਨ ਸਿਦਕੋਂ ਮੂਲੇ।
ਜਿਨ ਕਿਨ ਜਾਨ ਬਚਾਈ ਮਰਨੋਂ, ਮਤਲਬ ਲਇਆ ਨੂੰ ਮੂਲੇ।
ਸਾਹਿਬ ਸਿਦਕ ਸੋਹਣੀ ਦਾ ਰਖਸੀ ਖੁਸ਼ ਹੋ ਮੌਤ ਕਬੂਲੇ।
ਹਾਸ਼ਮ ਹਾਰ ਨ ਸਿਦਕੋਂ ਮੂਲੇ, ਹੋਗ ਭਲਾ ਇਤ ਸੂਲੇ।132।

ਉਹੀ, 178:

ਫੀ ਫਰਹਾਦ ਵਿਚਾਰੀ ਮਨ ਵਿਚ, ਜੇ ਮੈਂ ਪੈਰ ਹਟਾਵਾਂ।
ਤਾਂ ਹੁਣ ਲਾਜ ਇਸ਼ਕ ਨੂੰ ਲਗਦੀ, ਨਾਕਸ ਸਿਦਕ ਸਦਾਵਾਂ।349।

[17] ਉਹੀ, 84 :

ਲਿਖੇ ਲੇਖ ਦੀ ਡੋਰ ਨੂੰ ਜ਼ੋਰ ਡਾਢਾ।
ਕਿਸੇ ਪਾਸ ਨ ਟੁੱਟਦੀ ਮੂਲ ਤੋੜੀ।2।

ਕਿੱਸਿਆਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਹੀ ਮਿਲ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਉਦਾਹਰਣ ਵਜੋਂ, ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਸੰਬੰਧਾਂ ਦੇ ਚਿਤ੍ਰਣ ਦੀ ਪੱਧਰ ਉੱਤੇ ਉਹ ਆਪਣੇ ਨਾਇਕਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਨਾਇਕਾਵਾਂ ਦੇ ਦੁਖਾਂਤ ਦਾ ਮੂਲ 'ਵਾਉ ਜ਼ਮਾਨੇ ਵਾਲੀ'[18], 'ਦੂਤੀਆਂ' ਦੀ 'ਬਖ਼ੀਲੀ ਚੁਗਲੀ'[19], 'ਦਰਦਵੰਦਾਂ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਬਿਦਰਦਾਂ' ਦਾ 'ਦਗ਼ਾ' ਆਦਿ ਦੇ ਦੋਖੀ ਵਤੀਰੇ ਵਿਚ ਦਰਸਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਪਰ ਵਿਸ਼ਲੇਸ਼ਣਾਤਮਕ ਟਿੱਪਣੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਪੱਧਰ ਉੱਤੇ ਉਹ ਇਸ ਵਤੀਰੇ ਨੂੰ 'ਲਿਖੇ ਲੇਖਾਂ' ਦਾ ਹੀ ਪਸਾਰਾ ਮੰਨ ਲੈਂਦਾ ਹੈ :

ਦਰਦਵੰਦਾਂ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਬਿਦਰਦਾਂ, ਰਲ ਕੇ ਦਗ਼ਾ ਕਮਾਇਆ।
ਹਾਸ਼ਮ ਦੋਸ਼ ਕਿਸੇ ਵਿਚ ਨਾਹੀਂ, ਲੇਖ ਲਿਖੇ ਸੋਈ ਪਾਇਆ।117।[20]

ਇਸ ਰੂਪਾਂਤ੍ਰਣ ਦੀ ਉਸਦੇ ਕਾਵਿ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਆਪਕਤਾ ਉਸਦੀ ਰਚਨਾ ਨੂੰ 18ਵੀਂ ਸਦੀ ਦੇ ਦੂਜੇ ਅੱਧ ਦੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਸੰਦਰਭ ਨਾਲ ਜੋੜ ਦੇਂਦੀ ਹੈ।

ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਸੰਦਰਭ ਉਸਦੇ ਨਾਇਕ-ਨਾਇਕਾਵਾਂ ਦੇ ਦੁਖਾਂਤ ਪਲਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਇਕ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪਾਂਤ੍ਰਣ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਕਲ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਮੂਰਤੀਮਾਨ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਰੂਪਾਂਤ੍ਰਣ ਹੈ ਪਰਿਵੇਸ਼ ਦਾ। ਸੱਸੀ ਪੁੰਨੂੰ, ਸ਼ੀਰੀਂ ਫਰਹਾਦ ਅਤੇ ਸੋਹਣੀ ਮਹੀਂਵਾਲ ਆਦਿ ਕਿੱਸਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਨਾਇਕ ਜਾਂ ਨਾਇਕਾ ਦੀ ਮੌਤ ਦੀ ਘਟਨਾ ਸਮੇਂ ਪਰਿਵੇਸ਼ ਅਤਿ ਕਠੋਰ ਪ੍ਰਾਕ੍ਰਿਤਿਕ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਦਾ ਹੈ। ਸੱਸੀ ਵਿਚ ਇਹ ਪਰਿਵੇਸ਼ ਦੋਜ਼ਖ਼ ਵਾਂਗ ਤਪਦੇ ਮਾਰੂਥਲ ਦਾ ਹੈ,[21] ਸੋਹਣੀ ਵਿਚ ਕਾਲੀ-ਬੋਲੀ ਰਾਤ, ਬੇਲੇ ਅਤੇ ਤੂਫ਼ਾਨੀ ਦਰਿਆ ਦਾ[22] ਅਤੇ ਸ਼ੀਰੀਂ ਫ਼ਰਹਾਦ ਵਿਚ ਪਥਰੀਲੇ ਪਹਾੜ ਦਾ।[23] ਨਿਸ਼ਚੇ ਹੀ, ਕਾਮਿਲ ਆਸ਼ਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਦੁਖਾਂਤ ਦੇ ਇਹ ਕਠੋਰ ਪਰਿਵੇਸ਼ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਵਾਸਤਵਿਕਤਾ ਦੀ ਕਠੋਰਤਾ ਦੇ ਹੀ ਬਦਲੇ ਹੋਏ ਗਲਪ-ਰੂਪ ਹਨ। ਹਾਸ਼ਮ ਦਾ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਪ ਨੂੰ ਫ਼ਰਹਾਦ ਦਾ ਹੀ ਦੂਜਾ ਰੂਪ ਦੱਸਣਾ ਵੀ ਇਸ ਰੂਪਾਂਤ੍ਰਣ ਦਾ ਹੀ ਸੰਕੇਤਕ ਜਾਪਦਾ ਹੈ :

ਰਹਿਆ ਇਸ਼ਕ ਪਹਾੜ ਚਿਰੇਂਦਾ,
ਅਤੇ ਸੀ ਫ਼ਰਹਾਦ ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨਾ।
ਸੋਈ ਸ਼ਖ਼ਸ ਬੇਲੇ ਵਿਚ ਮੇਰੇ
ਐਵੇਂ ਹਾਸ਼ਮ ਨਾਮ ਬਹਾਨਾ।124।[24]

ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਵਾਸਤਵਿਕਤਾ ਦੀ ਕਠੋਰਤਾ ਦੇ ਟਾਕਰੇ ਲਈ ਹਾਸ਼ਮ 'ਕਾਮਿਲ ਇਸ਼ਕ' ਦੇ ਜਿਸ ਆਦਰਸ਼ ਦੀ ਟੇਕ ਲੈਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਉਹ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀ ਤੋਂ ਸੂਫ਼ੀ ਰਹੱਸਵਾਦ

[18] "ਹਾਸ਼ਮ-ਰਚਨਾਵਲੀ", 159.
[19] ਉਹੀ, 105, 172 ਅਤੇ 176.
[20] ਉਹੀ, 115.
[21] ਉਹੀ, 140-41.
[22] ਉਹੀ, 116.
[23] ਉਹੀ, 177.
[24] 'ਦੋਹੜੇ', "ਹਾਸ਼ਮ-ਰਚਨਾਵਲੀ", 213.

ਵਿਚ ਵਿਸਥਾਰ ਲੈਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਇਹਲੌਕਿਕ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀ ਤੋਂ ਫ਼ਕੀਰੀ ਸਦਾਚਾਰ ਵਿਚ। ਉਹ ਇਕ ਪਾਸੇ 'ਇਸ਼ਕ' ਨੂੰ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਉੱਚੀ 'ਬੰਦਗੀ' ਮੰਨਦਾ ਹੈ,[25] ਤੇ ਦੂਜੇ ਪਾਸੇ 'ਸੀਰਤ' ਨੂੰ। 'ਸੀਰਤ' ਨੂੰ ਉਹ 'ਗੁਲ' ਦੀ ਖੁਸ਼ਬੂ ਦੇ ਰੂਪਕ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਪਰਿਭਾਸ਼ਿਤ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ।[26] 'ਇਸ਼ਕ' ਅਤੇ 'ਸੀਰਤ' ਉਤੇ ਇਸ ਬਲ ਦਾ ਨਤੀਜਾ ਉਸਦੇ ਰੱਬ ਦਾ ਸਰੂਪ ਸੰਪਰਦਾਇਕ ਨਹੀਂ, 'ਸਾਹਿਬ ਰੱਬ' ਵਾਲਾ ਹੈ।[27] ਰੱਬ ਲਈ ਦੂਜਾ ਰੂਪਕ ਉਹ 'ਯਾਰ' ਜਾਂ 'ਦੋਸਤ' ਦਾ ਵਰਤਦਾ ਹੈ :

ਹਰ ਹਰ ਪੋਸਤ ਦੇ ਵਿਚ ਦੋਸਤ, ਉਹ ਦੋਸਤ ਰੂਪ ਵਟਾਵੇ।
ਦੋਸਤ ਤੀਕ ਨਾ ਪਹੁੰਚੇ ਕੋਈ, ਇਹ ਪੋਸਤ ਚਾਇ ਭੁਲਾਵੇ। 53।[28]

'ਸੀਰਤ' ਦੀ ਅੰਸ਼ ਕਾਰਣ ਹੀ 'ਕਾਮਿਲ ਇਸ਼ਕ' ਲਈ ਉਸਦੇ ਨਾਇਕਾਂ ਜਾਂ ਨਾਇਕਾਵਾਂ ਦੀ ਮੌਤ ਵਿਗੋਚੇ ਦੇ ਭਾਵ ਵਾਲੀ ਨਹੀਂ, ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀ ਦੇ ਭਾਵ ਵਾਲੀ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਉਸਦੇ ਨਾਇਕ-ਨਾਇਕਾਵਾਂ ਦੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਮੌਤ ਰਾਹੀਂ 'ਫ਼ਕੀਰੀ' ਅਥਵਾ 'ਸ਼ਹੀਦੀ' ਦੇ ਰੁਤਬੇ ਨੂੰ ਪਹੁੰਚਣ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ।[29]

ਆਸ਼ਕ ਦੀ ਮੌਤ ਦਾ ਇਹ ਆਦਰਸ਼ ਸੂਫ਼ੀਆਂ ਵਾਲੇ 'ਫ਼ਨਾਅ' ਦੇ ਆਦਰਸ਼ ਦਾ ਹੀ ਸਮੂਰਤਨ ਹੈ। ਆਸ਼ਕ ਦੀ ਮੌਤ ਉਸਦੀ ਨਜ਼ਰ ਵਿਚ ਇਕ ਦਮ ਦੀ ਮੌਤ ਨਹੀਂ, 'ਪਲ ਪਲ' ਦੀ ਮੌਤ ਹੈ। ਪਲ ਪਲ ਦੀ ਮੌਤ ਤੋਂ ਉਸਦਾ ਇਸ਼ਾਰਾ ਫ਼ਿਤਰਤ ਦੀਆਂ ਨੀਵੀਆਂ ਸੰਭਾਵਨਾਵਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਮੁਕਤੀ ਵਲ ਹੈ : 'ਹਾਸ਼ਮ ਜਾਣ ਸੋਈ ਸੁਖ ਪਾਵਗੁ, ਆਪਣਾ ਆਪ ਗਵਾਵੈਂ'।[30] ਪਲ ਪਲ ਦੀ ਇਸ ਮੌਤ ਦੇ ਸੰਕਲਪ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਹੀ ਉਹ 'ਫ਼ਨਾਅ' ਦੇ ਅਧਿਆਤਮਕ ਆਦਰਸ਼ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਹਾਰਕ ਸਦਾਚਾਰ ਦੇ ਇਹਲੌਕਿਕ ਧਰਾਤਲ ਉਤੇ ਉਤਾਰਨ ਦੀ ਕੋਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ : 'ਸਾਬਤ ਮੁਇਆ ਸੋ ਕਾਮਲ ਹੋਇਆ, ਮੁਕਤ ਮੁਇਆ ਬਿਨ ਨਾਹੀਂ।'[31]

ਕਹਿਣ ਦਾ ਮਤਲਬ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਹਾਸ਼ਮ ਦਾ 'ਕਾਮਿਲ ਇਸ਼ਕ' ਦਾ ਆਦਰਸ਼ ਇਕ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਵਾਸਤਵਿਕਤਾ ਦੀ ਕਠੋਰਤਾ ਦੇ ਟਾਕਰੇ ਲਈ ਬਣਾਇਆ ਕਵੀ ਦਾ

25 ਵੇਖੋ ਉਪਰ ਨੰ. 15

26 'ਦੋਹੜੇ', "ਹਾਸ਼ਮ-ਰਚਨਾਵਲੀ", 211 :

ਗੁਲ ਤੇ ਖ਼ਾਰ ਪੈਦਾਇਸ਼ ਇਕਸੇ, ਇਸ ਬਾਗ਼ ਚਮਨ ਦੇ ਦੋਵੀਂ।
ਇਕ ਸ਼ਬ ਉਮਰ ਗੁਲਾਂ ਦੀ ਓੜਕ, ਅਤੇ ਖ਼ਾਰ ਰਹੇ ਨਿਤ ਓਵੀਂ।
ਥੋੜਾ ਰਹਿਣ ਕਬੂਲ ਪਿਆਰੇ, ਪਰ ਤੂੰ ਖ਼ਾਰ ਨ ਹੋਵੀਂ।
ਹਾਸ਼ਮ ਆਣ ਮਿਲੀਂ ਗੁਲ ਹੱਸਕੇ, ਭਾਵੇਂ ਇਕ ਪਲ ਪਾਸ ਖਲੋਵੀਂ।

27 ਵੇਖੋ 'ਸ਼ੀਰੀਂ ਫ਼ਰਹਾਦ ਕੀ ਬਾਰਤਾ', "ਹਾਸ਼ਮ-ਰਚਨਾਵਲੀ", 148.

28 ਉਹੀ, 202.

29 ਉਹੀ, 120, 121, 143, 145 ਅਤੇ 188.

30 ਉਹੀ, 108.

31 ਉਹੀ, 187.

ਸਦਾਚਾਰਕ ਮੋਰਚਾ ਹੈ। ਮੋਰਚਾਬੰਦੀ ਦੇ ਭਾਵ ਕਾਰਣ ਹੀ ਇਸ ਵਿਚ ਤੀਖਣਤਾ ਹੈ। ਮੋਰਚਾਬੰਦੀ ਦੇ ਕਾਰਣ ਹੀ ਉਹ ਆਪਣੇ ਕਿੱਸਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰੇਮੀ ਨਾਇਕਾਂ ਜਾਂ ਨਾਇਕਾਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਜੂਝ ਮਰਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਯੋਧਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ: 'ਹਾਸ਼ਮ ਨਾਲ ਯਕੀਨ ਸੋਹਣੀ ਨੇ, ਦੇਖ ਅਹੇ ਦਿਨ ਝੱਲੇ'।[32]

ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਰਾਜਕਾਲ ਵਿਚ ਹਾਲਾਤ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਦੇ ਮੁਕਾਬਲੇ ਵਿਚ ਸੁਖਾਵੇਂ ਹੋ ਜਾਣ ਕਾਰਣ ਇਸ ਮੋਰਚਾਬੰਦੀ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਿੱਦਤ ਦਾ ਘਟ ਜਾਣਾ ਸੁਭਾਵਕ ਹੈ। ਹਾਸ਼ਮ ਦੇ ਕਾਵਿ ਵਿਚ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਖ਼ਾਮੋਸ਼ੀ ਇਸ ਸ਼ਿੱਦਤ ਦੇ ਵਿਗਠਨ ਦੀ ਅਲਾਮਤੀ ਸੂਚਨਾ ਹੋ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ। ਦੂਸਰੇ ਸ਼ਬਦਾਂ ਵਿਚ, ਇਹ ਖ਼ਮੋਸ਼ੀ ਸ਼ਾਇਦ ਹਾਲਾਤ ਵਿਚ ਆਈ ਤਬਦੀਲੀ ਦੀ ਗਵਾਹੀ ਹੈ। ਹਾਲਾਤ ਵਿਚ ਤਬਦੀਲੀ ਦਾ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਹਾਸ਼ਮ ਨੂੰ ਇਕ ਬਜ਼ੁਰਗ ਕਵੀ ਦੇ ਤੌਰ ਉੱਤੇ ਮਿਲੀ ਮਾਨਤਾ ਦਾ ਸਿੱਟਾ ਵੀ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ, ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਮਾਨਤਾ ਦੇ ਫਲਸਰੂਪ ਕਵੀ ਦੀਆਂ ਪ੍ਰਤਿਕ੍ਰਿਆਵਾਂ ਦਾ ਗੁਣ ਬਦਲ ਜਾਣ ਦੀ ਸੰਭਾਵਨਾ ਬਣ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ। ਹਾਸ਼ਮ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰੌਢ ਅਵਸਥਾ ਦੀ ਰਚਨਾ ਦੋਹੜਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਅਹਿਸਾਸ ਦੀ ਤੀਖਣਤਾ ਦੀ ਥਾਂ ਫ਼ਕੀਰੀ ਵਾਲੇ ਧੀਰਜ-ਭਾਵ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਬਲ ਹੋ ਜਾਣ ਦੀ ਕੋਈ ਹੋਰ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਲੱਭਣੀ ਕਠਿਨ ਹੈ।

ਪਰੰਤੂ, ਹਾਸ਼ਮ ਦੀਆਂ ਰਚਨਾਵਾਂ ਦੇ ਰਚਨਾ-ਕਾਲ ਦੇ ਨਿਰਧਾਰਣ ਨੂੰ ਜੇ ਅਜੇ ਖੁਲ੍ਹਾ ਸਵਾਲ ਮੰਨ ਲਿਆ ਜਾਵੇ ਤੇ ਕਲ੍ਹ ਨੂੰ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਰਚਨਾਵਾਂ ਦਾ ਰਚਨਾ-ਕਾਲ ਖ਼ੁਦ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਕਾਲ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਨਿਸ਼ਚਿਤ ਹੋ ਜਾਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਉਸਦੇ ਹੋਣੀਵਾਦ ਦੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਲਈ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਜਾਂ ਤਾਂ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਦਿਆਲੂ ਰਾਜਤੰਤਰ ਬਾਰੇ ਆਪਣਾ ਖ਼ਿਆਲ ਬਦਲਣਾ ਪਵੇਗਾ ਅਤੇ ਜਾਂ ਫਿਰ ਹਾਸ਼ਮ ਦੀਆਂ ਹਮਦਰਦੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਲਾਮਬੰਦੀ ਪੁਰਾਣੇ ਸਮਿਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਲੱਭਣੀ ਪਵੇਗੀ। ਕਿੱਸਾ ਸੋਹਣੀ ਮੇਹੀਂਵਾਲ ਦਾ ਵਿਚ ਉਹ ਸ਼ਾਹਜਹਾਨ ਦੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਨੂੰ 'ਨੇਕ' ਜ਼ਮਾਨਾ ਕਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ।[33] 'ਪਿਛਲਾ ਨੇਕ ਜ਼ਮਾਨਾ ਆਹਾ' ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਉਹ ਸ਼ੀਰੀਂ ਫਰਹਾਦ ਕੀ ਬਾਰਤਾ ਵਿਚ "ਪਿਛਲੇ ਔਰ ਇਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਕੀ ਬਾਰਤਾ" ਦੇ ਸਿਰਲੇਖ ਅਧੀਨ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ।[34] ਹਾਸ਼ਮ ਦੀ ਰਚਨਾ ਜੇ 18 ਵੀਂ ਸਦੀ ਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਉਸਦੇ ਮਿਥਿਕ ਆਦਰਸ਼ ਅਤੀਤ ਦੀ ਸਾਰਥਕਤਾ ਵੀ ਸਮਝੀ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ, ਪਰ ਜੇ ਉਸਦੀ ਰਚਨਾ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਕਾਲ ਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਆਦਰਸ਼ ਅਤੀਤ ਬਾਰੇ ਉਸਦੇ ਉਦਰੇਵੇਂ ਦੀ ਤਹਿ ਵਿਚ ਪਈਆਂ ਹਮਦਰਦੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਸਿਆਸੀ ਪਹਿਲੂ ਬਾਰੇ ਪੁਨਰ-ਵਿਚਾਰ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੋਵੇਗੀ।

[32] "ਹਾਸ਼ਮ-ਰਚਨਾਵਲੀ", 116.
[33] ਉਹੀ, 97.
[34] ਉਹੀ, 149-151.

ਮਟਕ ਕ੍ਰਿਤ ਜੰਗਨਾਮਾ ਸਿੰਘਾਂ ਤੇ ਫਰੰਗੀਆਂ—ਇਕ ਅਧਿਐਨ

ਰਾਇਜਸਬੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ*

ਮਟਕ ਦੀ ਰਚਨਾ ਜੰਗਨਾਮਾ ਸਿੰਘਾਂ ਤੇ ਫ਼ਰਗੀਆਂ 32 ਛੰਦਾਂ ਦੀ ਅਧੂਰੀ ਰਚਨਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਦੇ ਮੁੱਢਲੇ ਦੋ ਛੰਦ ਨਹੀਂ ਮਿਲਦੇ। 35ਵੇਂ ਛੰਦ ਦੀਆਂ ਦੋ ਅਧੂਰੀਆਂ ਪੰਕਤੀਆਂ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹਨ। ਡਾ. ਗੰਡਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਦੀ ਅਧੂਰੀ ਹੱਥ ਲਿਖਤ 1936 ਈ. ਵਿਚ ਭਾਈ ਨੌਰੰਗ ਸਿੰਘ, ਅਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ ਤੋਂ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋਈ ਸੀ।[1] ਇਸ ਦੀ ਕੋਈ ਹੋਰ ਹੱਥਲਿਖਤ ਅਜੇ ਤੱਕ ਨਹੀਂ ਮਿਲੀ।

ਇਸ ਦੇ ਛੰਦਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਆਖਰੀ ਪੰਕਤੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਮਟਕ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਆਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਮਟਕ ਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਇਸ ਰਚਨਾ ਦਾ ਕਰਤਾ ਹੋਵੇ। ਮਟਕ ਬਾਰੇ ਹੋਰ ਕੋਈ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਨਹੀਂ। ਇਉਂ ਲਗਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਮਟਕ, ਮੁਦਕੀ ਫ਼ੇਰੂ ਸ਼ਹਿਰ ਤੇ ਸਭਰਾਉਂ ਦੇ ਨੇੜੇ ਦੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਇਲਾਕੇ ਦਾ ਵਸਨੀਕ ਹੋਵੇ। ਇਕ ਤਾਂ ਉਹ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਥਾਵਾਂ ਉੱਤੇ ਹੀ ਹੋਈਆਂ ਲੜਾਈਆਂ ਦਾ ਵਰਣਨ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਦੂਜਾ, ਉਹ ਸਭਰਾਉ ਦੀ ਲੜਾਈ ਉੱਤੇ ਖਾਸ ਜ਼ੋਰ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਸ਼ਾਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਤੇ ਮੇਵਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਬਹਾਦਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਵੱਖ ਵੱਖ ਛੰਦਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਬਿਆਨ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਜਦੋਂ ਕਿ ਸ਼ਾਹ ਮੁਹੰਮਦ ਨੇ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਉੱਲੇਖ ਇੱਕੋ ਛੰਦ ਵਿਚ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ। ਤੀਜਾ, ਉਹ ਲੜਾਈ ਦਾ ਕਾਰਨ ਵੀ ਇਸ ਇਲਾਕੇ ਦੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਅੰਗ੍ਰੇਜ਼ਾਂ ਦੇ ਕਰ ਮੰਗਣ ਵਿਰੁੱਧ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਦਰਬਾਰ ਅੱਗੇ ਸ਼ਕਾਇਤ ਨੂੰ ਦਰਸਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਲਾਹੌਰ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੇ ਅਧੀਨ ਸਤਿਲੁਜ-ਦੱਖਣ (Cis-Satlej) ਦੇ ਇਲਾਕਿਆਂ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਇਸ ਖੇਤਰ ਦੇ ਨੇੜੇ ਫ਼ਰੀਦਕੋਟ ਤੇ ਫ਼ੀਰੋਜ਼ਪੁਰ ਪੈਂਦੇ ਹਨ।[2] ਫ਼ੀਰੋਜ਼ਪੁਰ ਅੰਗ੍ਰੇਜ਼ਾਂ ਨੇ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ

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[1] ਗੰਡਾ ਸਿੰਘ (ਸੰ), "ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੀਆਂ ਵਾਰਾਂ", ਖ਼ਾਲਸਾ ਕਾਲਜ, ਅਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ 1946, 277.

[2] B kramjit Hasrat, *Life and Times of Ranjit Singh*, Vishveshsaranand Vedic Research Institute, Hoshiarpur 1977, 88-89.

ਹੀ 1835 ਈ. ਵਿਚ ਕਬਜ਼ੇ ਵਿਚ ਕਰ ਲਿਆ ਸੀ ।[3] ਸੰਭਵ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਜਿਸ ਇਲਾਕੇ ਦੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਲਾਹੌਰ ਦਰਬਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਸ਼ਕਾਇਤ ਕਰਨ ਬਾਰੇ ਮਟਕ ਸੰਕੇਤ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ, ਫ਼ਰੀਦਕੋਟ ਹੀ ਹੋਵੇ । ਚੌਥਾ, ਉਹ ਫ਼ਰੀਦਕੋਟ ਦੇ ਰਾਜਾ ਪਹਾੜਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਫ਼ੌਜਾਂ ਵਿਰੁੱਧ ਕੀਤੀ ਗ਼ਦਾਰੀ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਦਾ । ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਇਸ ਹਾਕਮ ਤੋਂ ਡਰਦਾ ਹੋਵੇ । ਪਰ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਯਕੀਨ ਵਿਚ ਬਦਲਨ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਗਵਾਹੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ।

ਇਸ ਦੇ ਰਚਨਾ ਕਾਲ ਬਾਰੇ ਵੀ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਲੋੜੀਂਦੀ ਹੈ । ਇਸ ਦੇ ਆਖਰੀ ਪਤਰੇ ਗੁੰਮ ਹਨ । ਮੁੱਢਲੇ ਦੋ ਛੰਦ ਵੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਮਿਲਦੇ । ਪਾਠ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਵੀ ਰਚਨਾ ਕਾਲ ਬਾਰੇ ਕੋਈ ਇਸ਼ਾਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੁੰਦਾ । ਇਸ ਵਿਚ ਚੇਲਿਆਂ ਵਾਲਾ ਤੇ ਗੁਜਰਾਤ ਦੀਆਂ 1848-49 ਈ. ਦੀਆਂ ਲੜਾਈਆਂ ਦੇ ਹਾਲ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਨਹੀਂ; ਇਸ ਲਈ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਰਚਨਾ ਕਾਲ 1848 ਈ. ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਤੇ 1846 ਈ. ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਮੰਨ ਲਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ।[4] ਪਰ ਇਸ ਸੰਬੰਧੀ, ਦੋ ਟੁੱਕ ਗੱਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੀ । ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਮਟਕ ਨੇ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਲੜਾਈਆਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਵੀ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਹੋਵੇ ਜੋ ਅੱਜ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਨਹੀਂ ।

ਜੰਗਨਾਮਾ ਸਿੰਘਾਂ ਤੇ ਫਰੰਗੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਇਹ ਘਟਨਾਵਾਂ ਲਈਆਂ ਗਈਆਂ ਹਨ :

1 ਅੰਗ੍ਰੇਜ਼ਾਂ ਨੇ ਸਤਿਲੁਜ-ਦੱਖਣ ਦਾ ਸਿੱਖ ਇਲਾਕਾ ਮਲ ਲਿਆ ।[5] ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੇ ਇੱਕਠੇ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਲਾਹੌਰ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਪਾਸ ਸ਼ਕਾਇਤ ਕੀਤੀ ਕਿ ਅੰਗ੍ਰੇਜ਼ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਅਸਾਂ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਛਿਆਨੀ ਰੁਪੀ ਕਰ ਮੰਗਦੀ ਹੈ ।

2 ਇਸ ਸ਼ਕਾਇਤ ਨੂੰ ਸੁਣਨ ਲਈ ਸਮਨ ਬੁਰਜ, ਲਾਹੌਰ ਵਿਚ ਇਕੱਠ ਹੋਇਆ । ਮਿਸਰ ਦੀਨਾਨਾਥ ਨੇ ਇਹ ਸ਼ਕਾਇਤ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਦਲੀਪ ਸਿੰਘ ਪਾਸ ਪਹੁੰਚਾਈ ।

3 ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੇ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਸਮਾਧ ਉੱਤੇ ਅੰਗ੍ਰੇਜ਼ਾਂ ਦਾ ਟਾਕਰਾ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਪ੍ਰਣ ਲਿਆ ।

4 ਸ. ਲਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਤੇ ਸ. ਤੇਜ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਲੜਾਈ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਬੀੜਾ ਚੁੱਕਿਆ ਤੇ ਤਿਆਰੀ ਕੀਤੀ ।

5 ਸਿੱਖ ਫ਼ੌਜ ਨੇ ਪੋਹ ਦੀ ਸੰਗ੍ਰਾਂਦ ਨੂੰ ਹਰੀਕੇ ਪਤਨ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਸਤਿਲੁਜ ਪਾਰ ਕੀਤਾ ।[6]

6 ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਸਿੱਖ ਫ਼ੌਜ ਨੇ ਫ਼ੀਰੋਜ਼ਪੁਰ ਨੂੰ ਘੇਰ ਲਿਆ ।[7] ਸ. ਲਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਫ਼ੀਰੋਜ਼ਪੁਰ ਨੂੰ ਤਬਾਹ ਕਰਨਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦਾ ਸੀ, ਪਰ ਉਸ

[3] Hari Ram Gupta (ed), *Punjab on the Eve of First Sikh War*, Panjab University, Chandigarh 1975, 43.

[4] ਗੰਡਾ ਸਿੰਘ, "ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੀਆਂ ਵਾਰਾਂ", 274.

[5] J. D. Cunningham, *History of the Sikhs*, S. Chand & Co., Delhi 1966, 286.

[6] Ibid, 258.

[7] S. R Kohli, *Sunset of the Sikh Empire*, Orient Longmans, Bombay 1967, 106; J. D. Cunningham, *History of the Sikhs*, 263.

ਦੇ ਸਲਾਹਕਾਰ ਸ. ਬੁੜ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਰੋਕ ਦਿੱਤ। ਮਟਕ ਦਾ ਇਹ ਕਥਨ ਠੀਕ ਨਹੀਂ ਲਗਦਾ ਅਸਲ ਵਿਚ ਅੰਗ੍ਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਜਰਨੈਲ ਨਿਕਲਸਨ ਨਾਲ ਉਸ ਦੀ ਗੰਢ ਤੁੱਪ ਸੀ, ਜਿਸ ਨੇ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਅਜਿਹਾ ਕਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਰੋਕਿਆ ਸੀ।[8]

7 ਅੰਬਾਲੇ ਤੋਂ ਲਾਰਡ [ਹਾਰਡਿੰਗ] ਨੇ ਫ਼ੀਰੋਜ਼ਪੁਰ ਉੱਤੇ ਹਮਲਾ ਕੀਤਾ।[9] ਸ. ਲਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਟਾਕਰੇ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਵਧਿਆ।

8 ਵੀਰਵਾਰ ਵਾਲੇ ਦਿਨ ਲੜਾਈ ਦੀ ਤਿਆਰੀ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ ਤੇ [ਮੁਦਕੀ ਵਿਚ] ਲੜਾਈ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਹੋ ਗਈ।

9 ਇਸ ਲੜਾਈ ਵਿਚ ਸਿੱਖ ਫ਼ੌਜ ਨੂੰ ਹਾਰ ਹੋਈ ਅਤੇ 14 ਤੋਪਾਂ ਪਹਿਲੇ ਹੱਲੇ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਖੁੱਸ ਗਈਆਂ। ਅੰਗ੍ਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਸੂਤ੍ਰਾਂ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਖੁੱਸੀਆਂ ਤੋਪਾਂ ਦੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ 17 ਸੀ।[10]

10 ਸ਼ੁਕਰਵਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਸੁਲ੍ਹਾ ਨਾ ਹੋ ਸਕੀ। ਦੋਵੇਂ ਫ਼ੌਜਾਂ ਚੌਕਸ ਰਹੀਆਂ। ਅਗਲੇ ਦਿਨ ਫੇਰ ਚੌਕਸੀ ਰੱਖੀ ਗਈ ਅਤੇ ਲੜਾਈ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਫ਼ੌਜਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਤਿਆਰ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ।[11]

11 ਐਤਵਾਰ ਅੰਗ੍ਰੇਜ਼ਾਂ ਨੇ ਹਮਲੇ ਦੀ ਤਿਆਰੀ ਕੀਤੀ।

12 ਸੋਮਵਾਰ ਨੂੰ [ਫੇਰੂ ਸ਼ਹਿਰ ਵਿਚ] ਲੜਾਈ ਹੋਈ। ਸਿੱਖ ਫ਼ੌਜਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪਿੱਛੇ ਹਟਣਾ ਪਿਆ। ਫ਼ਰਾਂਸੀਸੀ ਪਲਟਣਾਂ ਨੇ ਕੁੱਝ ਦੇਰ ਟੱਕਰ ਜਾਰੀ ਰੱਖੀ। ਸ. ਲਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਧ੍ਰੋਹ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਫ਼ੌਜਾਂ ਦਾ ਸਾਥ ਛੱਡ ਦਿੱਤਾ।[12] ਇਉਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਫ਼ੌਜ ਨੂੰ ਪੂਰੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਹਾਰ ਹੋ ਗਈ।

13 ਇਸ ਲੜਾਈ ਵਿਚ ਸ. ਤੇਜ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਵੀ ਧ੍ਰੋਹ ਕਮਾਇਆ।[13] ਸਿੱਖ ਫ਼ੌਜਾਂ ਨੇ ਦਰਿਆਉਂ ਪਾਰ ਇਕੱਠ ਕੀਤਾ ਤੇ ਸ. ਲਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਮਾਰਨ ਦੀ ਸਕੀਮ ਬਣਾਈ। ਪਰ ਸ. ਤੇਜ ਸਿੰਘ ਤੇ ਸ. ਬੁੜ ਸਿੰਘ

8 Ganda Singh (ed), *Private Correspondence Relating to the Anglo-Sikh Wars*, Sikh History Society, Amritsar 1955, 90.

9 S. R. Kohli, *Sunset of the Sikh Empire*, 105.

10 ਕਾਨ੍ਹ ਸਿੰਘ ਬੰਗਿਆਂ ਵਾਲਾ (ਛੰਦ ਨੰ. 269) ਵੀ ਤੋਪਾਂ ਦੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ 14 ਦੱਸਦਾ ਹੈ। ਸ਼ਾਹ ਮੁਹੰਮਦ ਨੇ ਤੋਪਾਂ ਦੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਦਿੱਤੀ। See S. R. Kohli, *Sunset of the Sikh Empire*, 107; also, J. D. Cunningham, *History of the Sikhs*, 265.

11 S. R. Kohli, *Sunset of the Sikh Empire*, 108.

12 Ibid, 110.

13 Loc cit.

ਨੇ ਮਿੰਨਤਾਂ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਬਚਾ ਲਿਆ। ਇਸ ਘਟਨਾ ਦਾ ਹੋਰ ਕੋਈ ਸ੍ਰੋਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਮਿਲਦਾ।

14 ਖ਼ਾਲਸਾ ਫ਼ੌਜ ਨੇ, ਫੇਰ, ਅੰਗ੍ਰੇਜ਼ਾਂ ਦਾ ਟਾਕਰਾ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਤਿਆਰੀ ਕੀਤੀ ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਣ ਲਏ। ਸ. ਲਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਤੇ ਸ. ਤੇਜ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਵੀ ਤਿਆਰੀ ਕੀਤੀ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਸਿਰ ਅੰਗ੍ਰੇਜ਼ਾਂ ਉੱਤੇ ਹਮਲਾ ਨਾ ਕੀਤਾ, ਸਗੋਂ ਦੋ ਮਹੀਨੇ ਦਾ ਵਕਫ਼ਾ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਤਿਆਰੀ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਦੇ ਦਿੱਤਾ।[14]

15 ਫੱਗਣ ਦੀ ਸੰਗ੍ਰਾਂਦ, ਮੰਗਲਵਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਅੰਗ੍ਰੇਜ਼ਾਂ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਹਮਲੇ ਦੀ ਤਿਆਰੀ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ [ਸਭਰਾਉਂ ਦੇ ਥਾਂ ਉੱਤੇ] ਲੜਾਈ ਹੋਈ।

16 ਇਸ ਲੜਾਈ ਵਿਚ ਸ. ਸ਼ਾਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਬਹਾਦਰੀ ਨਾਲ ਵੈਰੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਟਾਕਰਾ ਕੀਤਾ।[15]

17 ਮੇਵਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਮਰਦਊਪੁਣੇ ਦਾ ਉੱਲੇਖ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਕਰਨ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਇਹ ਰਚਨਾ ਅਧੂਰੀ ਖ਼ਤਮ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ। ਇਉਂ ਇਸ ਰਚਨਾ ਵਿਚ ਸਭਰਾਉਂ ਦੀ ਲੜਾਈ ਦਾ ਪੂਰਾ ਹਾਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਆ ਸਕਿਆ।

ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਇਸ ਰਚਨਾ ਵਿਚ ਮੁਦਕੀ ਫ਼ੇਰੂ ਸ਼ਹਿਰ ਤੇ ਸਭਰਾਉਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਲੜਾਈਆਂ ਦਾ ਹਾਲ ਦਰਜ ਹੈ। ਮਟਕ ਨੇ ਆਲੀਵਾਲ, ਬੱਦੋਵਾਲ ਤੇ ਲੁਧਿਆਣੇ ਦੀਆਂ ਲੜਾਈਆਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਕੁੱਝ ਨਹੀਂ ਲਿਖਿਆ। ਉਸ ਨੇ ਨਾ ਤਾਂ ਲੜਾਈਆਂ ਦੇ ਸਥਾਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਨਾਂ ਲਿਆ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਨਾ ਉਹ ਘਟਨਾਵਾਂ ਦੇ ਸੰਮਤ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਉਸ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਸੰਬੰਧੀ ਵਾਰ (ਦਿਨ) ਤੇ ਬਿਕਰਮੀ ਸੰਮਤ ਦੇ ਮਹੀਨਿਆਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਮਿਤੀਆਂ ਦਿੱਤੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਇਹ ਅੰਗ੍ਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਰਚਨਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਦਿੱਤੀਆਂ ਤਾਰੀਖਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਮੇਲ ਖਾਂਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ।[16] ਪਰ ਸ਼ਾਹ ਮੁਹੰਮਦ ਤੇ ਕਾਨ੍ਹ ਸਿੰਘ ਬੰਗਿਆਂ ਵਾਲੇ ਨੇ ਲੜਾਈਆਂ ਦੇ ਸਥਾਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਨਾਂ ਲਏ ਹਨ, ਪਰ ਮਿਤੀਆਂ ਤੇ ਦਿਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਦਿੱਤੇ। ਲੜਾਈ ਦਾ ਵਰਣਨ ਸੰਖੇਪ ਹੈ, ਅਤੇ ਕਾਫ਼ੀ ਹੱਦ ਤੱਕ ਤਤਕਾਲੀ ਰਚਨਾਵਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਮੇਲ ਖਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਮਟਕ ਨੇ ਜੰਗ ਸਿੰਘਾਂ ਤੇ ਫਰੰਗੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਜੋ ਕਾਰਨ ਦੱਸਿਆ ਹੈ, ਉਸ ਤੋਂ ਲਾਹੌਰ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੇ ਕਰ ਦਾਤਾ ਇਲਾਕਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਸਿੱਖ ਰਾਜ ਦੀ ਲੋਕਪ੍ਰਿਅਤਾ ਦਾ ਪਤਾ ਲਗਦਾ ਹੈ। ਜਦੋਂ ਅੰਗ੍ਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੇ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਇਲਾਕਿਆਂ ਉੱਤੇ ਕਬਜ਼ਾ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਮਾਲੀਆ ਲਗਾਇਆ ਤਾਂ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੇ ਲਾਹੌਰ ਦਰਬਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਸ਼ਕਾਇਤ ਕੀਤੀ। ਅੰਗ੍ਰੇਜ਼ਾਂ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਲਗਾਇਆ ਮਾਲੀਆ ਕਰ 6/16 ਲਾਹੌਰ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੇ ਆਮ ਮਾਲੀਆ ਕਰ 1/4 ਤੋਂ 1/6

[14] S. R. Kolhi, *Sunset of the Sikh Empire*, 110.

[15] L. H. Griffin, *The Panjab Chiefs*, Chronicle Press, Lahore 1865, 63-64

[16] J. D. Cunningham, *History of the Sikhs*, 264, 266 & 282.

ਤੋਂ ਵਧ ਸੀ;[17] ਅੰਗ੍ਰੇਜ਼ਾਂ ਦੇ ਡਰ, ਵਧੇਰੇ ਮਾਲੀਆ ਦਰ ਤੇ ਲਾਹੌਰ ਦਰਬਾਰ ਦੀ ਲੋਕ ਪ੍ਰਿਅਤਾ ਨੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਕਦਮ ਚੁੱਕਣ ਲਈ ਮਜਬੂਰ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ।

ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਤਤਕਾਲੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਤੰਤਰ (ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਕਰ ਯੁੱਧ ਦੀ ਤਿਆਰੀ ਸਬੰਧੀ) ਬਾਰੇ ਵੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਦਲੀਪ ਸਿੰਘ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਨਬਾਲਗ ਸੀ, ਫੇਰ ਵੀ ਉਸ ਦੀ ਮੌਜੂਦਗੀ ਵਿਚ ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਸ਼ਕਾਇਤ ਸੁਣਨ ਲਈ ਦਰਬਾਰ ਲਗਾਇਆ ਗਿਆ। ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਸਮਾਧ ਉੱਤੇ ਇੱਕਠ ਕਰ ਕੇ, ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਰੀਤਾਂ ਨਿਭਾ ਕੇ, ਅੰਗ੍ਰੇਜ਼ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦਾ ਮੁਕਾਬਲਾ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਪ੍ਰਣ ਕੀਤੇ ਗਏ ਅਤੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਉੱਤੇ ਹੱਥ ਰੱਖ ਕੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਮੰਤਵ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਵਫਾਦਾਰ ਰਹਿਣ ਲਈ ਸੌਗੰਧ ਲਈ ਗਈ। ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਗਿਆਤ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਤਤਕਾਲੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਤੰਤਰ ਵਿਚ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਕਿੰਨੀ ਇੱਜ਼ਤ ਸੀ। ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਨਬਾਲਗ ਸੀ ਫੇਰ ਵੀ ਉਸ ਦਾ ਪੂਰਾ ਸਤਿਕਾਰ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਸੀ ਤੇ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਪੂਰਨ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਦਾਰ ਸਮਝਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਉਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਪੰਚਾਇਤ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਫੈਸਲਾ ਲੈਣ ਦੀ ਰਸਮ ਦਾ ਵੀ ਪਤਾ ਚਲਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਦਾ ਸਿੱਖ ਤੰਤਰ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ, ਪੰਚਾਇਤੀ ਤੇ ਰਾਜਾਸ਼ਾਹੀ ਦਾ ਸੁਮੇਲ ਸੀ। ਸ. ਕਾਨ੍ਹ ਸਿੰਘ ਬੰਗਿਆਂ ਵਾਲਾ ਤੇ ਸ਼ਾਹ ਮੁਹੰਮਦ ਦੀਆਂ ਰਚਨਾਵਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਤੰਤਰ ਬਾਰੇ ਪਤਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਲਗਦਾ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਮਹਾਰਾਣੀ ਜਿੰਦਾਂ ਦੀ ਕਥਿਤ ਸਾਜ਼ਿਸ਼ ਵਿਚ ਉਲਝ ਕੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਤੰਤਰ ਨੂੰ ਛੁਹਿਆ ਤੱਕ ਨਹੀਂ।

ਮਟਕ ਲਾਹੌਰ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੀ ਫੌਜ ਵਿਚ ਕਿਸੇ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ਜਰਨੈਲ ਦੀ ਹੋਂਦ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਉੱਲੇਖ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਦਾ। ਉਹ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਇਲਾਵਾ ਕੇਵਲ ਫ਼ਰਾਂਸੀਸੀ ਫੌਜਾਂ ਦੀ ਹੋਂਦ ਬਾਰੇ ਦੱਸਦਾ ਹੈ। ਸ਼ਾਹ ਮੁਹੰਮਦ ਮਜ਼ਹਰ ਅਲੀ, ਮਾਖੇ ਖਾਂ, ਤੇ ਇਲਾਹੀ ਬਖਸ਼ ਦੇ ਲਾਹੌਰ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੀਆਂ ਫ਼ੌਜਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਸ਼ਾਮਿਲ ਹੋਣ ਬਾਰੇ ਦੱਸਦਾ ਹੈ।[18] ਜਿੱਥੇ ਸ਼ਾਹ ਮੁਹੰਮਦ ਦੀ ਰਚਨਾ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਉਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਹਿੰਦੂ, ਸਿੱਖ, ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਸਾਂਝ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਪੰਜਾਬੀਅਤ ਦੀ ਭਾਵਨਾ ਨਜ਼ਰ ਆਉਂਦੀ ਹੈ, ਏਥੇ ਉਸ ਦਾ ਅਭਾਵ ਹੈ।[19] ਉਸ ਨੇ ਲਾਹੌਰ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੀ ਫ਼ੌਜ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਖ ਫ਼ੌਜ ਤੱਕ ਹੀ ਸੀਮਿਤ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਹੈ, ਜੋ ਵਾਸਤਵਿਕਤਾ ਨਹੀਂ।

ਫੇਰੂ ਸ਼ਹਿਰ ਦੀ ਲੜਾਈ ਵਿਚ ਹਾਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਸਿੱਖ ਫ਼ੌਜ ਦਾ ਸ. ਲਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਮਾਰਨ ਦਾ ਜਤਨ ਤੇ ਸ. ਤੇਜ ਸਿੰਘ ਤੇ ਸ. ਬੂੜ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਬਚਾਉਣਾ ਇਸ ਰਚਨਾ ਦੀ ਹੋਰ ਨਵੀਂ ਸਾਮਗ੍ਰੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਰਚਨਾ ਵਿਚ ਆਏ ਸ. ਬੂੜ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਕਿਰਦਾਰ

[17] ਇਸ ਇਲਾਕੇ ਉੱਤੇ ਲਾਹੌਰ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦਾ ਮਾਲੀਆ ਦਰ (ਸਿੰਜੀ ਜਾਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਜ਼ਮੀਨ ਉੱਤੇ) 1/4 ਤੋਂ 1/6 ਸੀ : Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs* Manohar Publications, New Dehli 1978, 91.

[18] ਗੰਡਾ ਸਿੰਘ, "ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੀਆਂ ਵਾਰਾਂ", 207.

[19] ਉਹੀ, 223.

ਬਾਰੇ ਸ਼ਾਹ ਮੁਹੰਮਦ ਤ ਕਾਨ੍ਹ ਸਿੰਘ ਬੰਗਿਆਂ ਵਾਲਾ ਦੋਵੇਂ ਚੁੱਪ ਹਨ। ਕਿਸੇ ਅੰਗ੍ਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਸ੍ਰੋਤ ਵਿਚ ਉਸ ਦਾ ਉੱਲੇਖ ਨਹੀਂ ਮਿਲਦਾ।

ਇਸ ਰਚਨਾ ਤੋਂ ਪਤਾ ਲਗਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸਿੱਖ ਫ਼ੌਜ ਦੇ ਹਾਰਨ ਦਾ ਕਾਰਨ ਸ. ਤੇਜ ਸਿੰਘ ਤੇ ਸ. ਲਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਗਦਾਰੀ ਸੀ। ਉਹ ਇਹ ਵੀ ਦੱਸਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਫ਼ੇਰੂ ਸ਼ਹਿਰ ਦੀ ਲੜਾਈ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਹਾਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਸਿੱਖ ਫੌਜ ਸ. ਲਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਉਸ ਦੀ ਗਦਾਰੀ ਕਾਰਨ ਮਾਰਨਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੀ ਸੀ। ਉਹ ਕਾਨ੍ਹ ਸਿੰਘ ਬੰਗਿਆਂ ਵਾਲੇ ਵਾਂਗ ਸਿੱਖ ਫ਼ੌਜ ਦੀ ਹਾਰ ਦਾ ਕਾਰਨ ਤਕੱਬਰ ਵਿਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਵੇਖਦਾ ਤੇ ਨਾ ਹੀ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਰਾਣੀ ਜਿੰਦਾਂ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਫ਼ੌਜ ਵਿਰੁੱਧ ਅੰਗ੍ਰੇਜ਼ਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਰਚੀ ਸਾਜ਼ਿਸ਼ ਸਮਝਦਾ ਹੈ।[20] ਸ਼ਾਹ ਮੁਹੰਮਦ ਨੇ ਵੀ ਰਾਣੀ ਜਿੰਦਾਂ ਦੀ ਸਾਜ਼ਿਸ਼ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਖ ਫ਼ੌਜ ਦੀ ਤਬਾਹੀ ਦਾ ਮੂਲ ਬਣਾਇਆ ਹੈ।[21] ਪਰ ਇਸ ਸੰਬੰਧੀ ਅੰਗ੍ਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਸ੍ਰੋਤਾਂ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਕੁੱਝ ਵੀ ਪਤਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਲਗਦਾ। ਇਉਂ, ਮਟਕ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਦੱਸਿਆ ਗਿਆ, ਸਿੱਖ ਫ਼ੌਜ ਦੀ ਹਾਰ ਦਾ ਕਾਰਨ ਕਾਫ਼ੀ ਹੱਦ ਤੱਕ ਵਾਸਤਵਿਕਤਾ ਦੇ ਨੇੜੇ ਹੈ।

ਲੜਾਈ ਦੇ ਵਰਣਨ ਵਿਚ ਮਟਕ ਨੇ ਸ਼ਾਹ ਮੁਹੰਮਦ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਘਟ ਨਿਰਪੱਖਤਾ ਵਿਖਾਈ ਹੈ। ਉਹ ਦੋਹਾਂ ਧਿਰਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਫ਼ੌਜਾਂ ਦਾ ਟਾਕਰਾ ਤਾਂ ਵਿਖਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ, ਪਰ ਸ਼ਾਹ ਮੁਹੰਮਦ ਵਾਂਗ ਸਿੱਖ ਫ਼ੌਜਾਂ ਦੇ ਹਾਰ ਕੇ ਵਾਪਸ ਆਉਣ ਵੇਲੇ ਜਿੱਚ ਹੋਏ ਫ਼ੌਜੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਚਿਤਰ ਪੇਸ਼ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਦਾ।[22] ਦੂਜਾ, ਉਹ ਧ੍ਰੋਹੀਆਂ ਤੇ ਪਿੱਠ ਦੇ ਕੇ ਭੱਜਣ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਲਾਹਨਤ ਵੀ ਪਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਜਿੱਥੇ ਸ਼ਾਹ ਮੁਹੰਮਦ ਨੇ ਤੇਜ ਸਿੰਘ ਤੇ ਲਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਗਦਾਰੀ ਦਾ ਉੱਲੇਖ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਨਿੰਦਿਆ ਨਹੀਂ, ਓਥੇ ਮਟਕ ਦੀ ਰਚਨਾ ਵਿਚ ਇਹ ਖ਼ਾਸ ਵਿਲਖਣਤਾ ਹੈ। ਉਹ ਸ. ਸ਼ਾਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਤੇ ਸ. ਮੇਵਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਬਹਾਦਰੀ ਤੇ ਕੁਰਬਾਨੀ ਦਾ ਗਾਇਨ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਸਿੱਖ ਰਾਜ ਦਾ ਪੱਖ ਲੈਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਤਤਕਾਲੀ ਸੰਦਰਭ ਵਿਚ ਸੰਭਵ ਤੇ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਵੀ ਸੀ।

ਇਸ ਰਚਨਾ ਦਾ ਮੰਤਵ ਲੜਾਈਆਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਘਟਨਾਵਾਂ ਦਾ ਵਰਣਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਜਾਪਦਾ। ਜੇ ਅਜੇਹਾ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਤਾਂ ਉਹ ਘਟਨਾਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇੰਨਾ ਸੰਖੇਪ ਨਾ ਕਰਦਾ। ਉਸ ਦਾ ਮੰਤਵ ਸ. ਤੇਜ ਸਿੰਘ ਤੇ ਸ. ਲਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਗਦਾਰੀ ਦੱਸਣਾ, ਗਦਾਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਲਾਹਨਤਾਂ ਪਾਉਣਾ ਤੇ ਸ. ਸ਼ਾਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਤੇ ਸ. ਮੇਵਾ ਸਿੰਘ, ਆਦਿ ਦੀ ਰਾਜ ਭਗਤੀ ਤੇ ਸ਼ਹੀਦੀ ਦਾ ਗੁਣ ਗਾਇਨ ਕਰਨਾ ਹੈ। ਉਹ ਦੱਸਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਘੋੜ ਚੜ੍ਹੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਫ਼ੌਜੀ ਐਸ਼ਾਂ ਤਾਂ ਬਹੁਤ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ, ਤਲਬਾਂ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਲੈਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਤੇ ਬਹਾਦਰ ਵੀ ਅਖਵਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ; ਪਰ ਲੜਾਈ ਦੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੌੜ ਆਉਂਦੇ ਤੇ ਸਿਰੀ ਲੁਕਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ, ਆਪਣੇ ਆਪ ਨੂੰ ਪੰਜ ਹਜ਼ਾਰੀ ਤ ਬੰਦੂਕਚੀ ਕਹਾਉਣ ਵਾਲੇ

[20] ਗੰਡਾ ਸਿੰਘ, "ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੀਆਂ ਵਾਰਾਂ" 254-56.

[21] ਉਹੀ, 222.

[22] ਸ਼ਾਹ ਮੁਹੰਮਦ, ਛੰਦ 77 ਅਤੇ 86-87: ਵੇਖੋ, ਸ਼ਮਸ਼ੇਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਸ਼ੋਕ (ਸੰ), "ਪ੍ਰਾਚੀਨ ਵਾਰਾਂ ਤੇ ਜੰਗਨਾਮੇ" ਸ਼੍ਰੋਮਣੀ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕ ਕਮੇਟੀ, ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ 1971, 275 ਅਤੇ 277-78.

ਸ਼ਰਮ ਲਾਹ ਕੇ ਲੜਾਈ ਵਿਚ ਪਿੱਠ ਵਿਖਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਸ. ਲਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਤੇ ਸ. ਤੇਜ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਧ੍ਰੋਹ ਦਾ ਵਰਣਨ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਮਟਕ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮੂਜ਼ੀ ਤੇ ਗੀਦੀ ਆਖਦਾ ਹੈ।[23]

ਦੂਜੇ ਪਾਸੇ ਉਹ ਸ. ਸ਼ਾਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਬਹਾਦਰੀ ਦੀ ਉਸਤਤ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੋਇਆ, ਆਪਣੇ ਸੰਕਲਪ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਸੁਰਗ ਵਿਚ ਲੈ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ, ਤੇ ਕਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸ. ਸ਼ਾਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਉਥੇ ਆਨੰਦ ਮਾਣ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਇਉਂ, ਮਟਕ ਦੀ ਰਚਨਾ ਰਾਜ ਭਗਤੀ, ਕੁਰਬਾਨੀ ਤੇ ਬਹਾਦਰੀ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਣਾ ਦਾ ਸੋਮਾ ਮੰਨੀ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ।

[23] ਇਸ ਥਾਂ ਕੋਈ ਹੋਰ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਸੀ। ਡਾ. ਗੰਡਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਉਸ ਅਸ਼ਲੀਲ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਦੀ ਥਾਂ ਪਾਠ ਵਿਚ ਇਹ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਪਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ: ਵੇਖੋ, ਗੰਡਾ ਸਿੰਘ, "ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੀਆਂ ਵਾਰਾਂ", 279.

ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ
ਤਤਕਾਲੀ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਕਵਿਤਾ ਵਿਚ

ਧਰਮ ਸਿੰਘ*

ਇਹ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਸਖਸ਼ੀਅਤ ਦਾ ਨਵਕਲਾ ਗੁਣ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਅਜ ਸਾਡੇ ਕੋਲ ਅਜੇਹੀ ਕਵਿਤਾ ਦਾ ਤਸੱਲੀਬਖਸ਼ ਭੰਡਾਰ ਮੌਜੂਦ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਸਿੱਧੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਉਸਦੇ ਸ਼ਖਸੀ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਦਾ ਹੀ ਨਤੀਜਾ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਅਤੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਜਗਤ ਸਿਵਾਇ ਸ਼ਾਹ ਮੁਹੰਮਦ ਦੇ ਹੋਰ ਕਿਸੇ ਨਾਲ ਚੰਗੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਪਰਿਚਿਤ ਨਹੀਂ।

ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਬਾਰੇ ਤਤਕਾਲੀ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਕਵਿਤਾ ਵਿਚ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾ ਹਵਾਲਾ ਕਵੀ ਸੌਂਧਾ ਦਾ ਹੈ। ਕਵੀ ਸੌਂਧਾ ਦੀ ਇਕ ਰਚਨਾ ਸ਼ਾਹ ਜ਼ਮਾਨ ਦੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਉੱਪਰ ਆਖਰੀ ਹਮਲੇ ਬਾਰੇ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਉਸਨੇ 1798 ਈ. ਨੂੰ ਕੀਤਾ। ਰਾਮ ਨਗਰ ਬੈਠੇ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਸਿੰਘ ਇਕ ਏਲਚੀ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਸ਼ਾਹ ਜ਼ਮਾਨ ਦੇ ਹਮਲੇ ਬਾਰੇ ਦਸਦਾ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਲਈ ਪੁਕਾਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਕਵੀ ਦੇ ਸ਼ਬਦਾਂ ਵਿਚ :

ਰਾਮ ਨਗਰ ਕੋ ਜਾਹੁ ਅਬ, ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਕੇ ਪਾਸ
ਦੀਜਹੁ ਤਾਕੇ ਹਾਥ ਮਹਿ, ਮੇਰੀ ਇਹ ਅਰਦਾਸ
ਕੁਲ ਕੁਟੰਬ ਅਰ ਦੇਸ ਕੀ, ਸਾਝ ਤੁਮਾਰੇ ਸੰਗ
ਇਸ ਕਾਰਨ ਤੁਮ ਕੋ ਲਿਖਿਉ, ਆਵਹੂ ਛਾਡਿ ਦਿਰੰਗ

ਸੁਨੇਹਾ ਮਿਲਣ ਤੇ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਜੋਧ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਮਦਦ ਲਈ ਭੇਜ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਤੇ ਆਪ ਵੀ ਛੇਤੀ ਆਉਣ ਦਾ ਵਾਅਦਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਦੂਤ ਨੂੰ ਪਰਤਾ ਦਿਤਾ :

ਕਥਾ ਪੁਰਾਤਨ ਸੁਨੋ ਅਬ, ਬਹੁਰ ਸਰਬ ਕਰ ਧਿਆਨ
ਦੂਤ ਬਾਰਤਾ ਸਭ ਕਹੀ, ਰਾਮ ਨਗਰ ਮੈ ਆਨ
ਸੁਨੀ ਸਰਬ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ, ਮਨ ਮਹਿ ਲਈ ਗਿਨਾਇ
ਜਧ ਸਿੰਘ ਭੂਪਾਲ ਕੋ, ਦੀਨੋ ਤਹ ਪਠਾਇ

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ਮੁਖ ਤੇ ਕਹਿ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ, ਤਿਨ ਕੋਂ ਦੀਆ ਪਠਾਇ
ਪੀਛੈ ਮੈ ਹੀ ਆਇ ਹੋਂ, ਤੁਮਰੀ ਕਰੋਂ ਸਹਾਇ ।

ਕਵੀ ਸੌਂਧਾ ਦੀ ਇਕ ਹੋਰ ਰਚਨਾ **ਹਾਤਮਨਾਮਾ** ਵੀ ਮਿਲਦੀ ਹੈ । ਇਸ ਦਾ ਰਚਨਾ ਕਾਲ 1807-08 ਈ. ਹੈ । ਇਸ ਵਿਚ ਲੇਖਕ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਰਾਜ ਨੂੰ ਹੋਰ ਧਾੜਵੀਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਪਾਕ ਰਾਜ ਦਸਦਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਕਾਮਨਾ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਅਜੇਹੇ ਸਤਿਆਵਾਨ ਰਾਜੇ ਦਾ ਰਾਜ ਚਿਰਜੀਵੀ ਹੋਵੇ । ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਕਵੀ ਦੀਆਂ ਉਕਤੀਆਂ ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਰ ਹਨ :

ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਭੂਪਾਲ ਕੀ, ਅਸਥਿਰ ਹੋਵੇ ਰਾਜ
ਇਹ ਹੈ ਭਾਵਨੀ ਦਾਸ ਕੀ, ਸਵਰਹਿ ਤਾ ਕੇ ਕਾਜ
ਜਬ ਲੌ ਅਸਥਿਰ ਜਗਤ ਮਹਿ, ਗੰਗ ਜਮਨ ਕੋ ਨੀਰ
ਤਬ ਲੌ ਤਾ ਕੇ ਰਾਜ ਕੋ, ਰਾਖੇ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਰਘੁਬੀਰ

. . .

ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਕੇ ਰਾਜ ਮਹਿ, ਜੈਸੇ ਆਵਹਿ ਜਾਹਿ
ਚੋਰ ਧਾੜਵੀ ਦੂਰ ਰਹੇ, ਕੋਈ ਬੁਲਾਵੇ ਨਾਹਿ
ਐਸੇ ਸਤਿਆਵਾਨ ਕਾ, ਜੁਗ ਜੁਗ ਹੋਵੇ ਰਾਜ
ਜੀਅ ਘਾਤ ਹੋਵੇ ਨਹੀ, ਐਸਾ ਨੀਚ ਅਕਾਜ ।[1]

ਤਕਰੀਬਨ ਇਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਲਿਖੀ ਗਈ ਇਕ ਰਚਨਾ **ਸੀਹਰਫੀ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਕੀ** ਕਵੀ ਸਾਵਣਯਾਰ ਦੀ ਹੈ । ਇਹ ਸੀਹਰਫੀ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਬਾਰੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਵਿਚ ਲਿਖੀ ਗਈ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਕਸੀਦਾ-ਨੁਮਾ ਰਚਨਾ ਹੈ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਇਸ ਵਿਚ ਨਾਇਕ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਖਸੀਅਤ, ਉਸ ਦੇ ਅਦਲੋ ਇਨਸਾਫ, ਪਰਜਾ-ਪਾਲਣ, ਇਕਬਾਲ, ਸ਼ਾਂਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਖੁਸ਼ਹਾਲੀ, ਉਸ ਦੀ ਸਖਾਵਤ, ਦਰਬਾਰ, ਤਖਤ ਆਦਿ ਹਰ ਚੀਜ਼ ਦੀ ਉਪਮਾ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੋਈ ਹੈ । ਵੱਖ ਵੱਖ ਪੱਖਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਕੁਝ ਸ਼ਿਅਰ ਵੇਖੋ :

ਬੇ ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹ ਮੁਲਖ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦਾ ਈ
ਜਿਸ ਅਦਲ ਪਾਇਆ ਪਾਂਡੋ ਕੈਰਵਾਂ ਦਾ
ਸ਼ੱਦਾਦ ਸ਼ਮਸ਼ਾਦ ਨਮਰੂਦ ਵਾਂਗੂ
ਫਿਰਊਨ ਕਹਊਨ ਨੌਸ਼ੇਰਵਾਂ ਦਾ
ਰਾਜੇ ਬਿਕ੍ਰਮਾਜੀਤ ਮਹਾਜੀਤ ਰਾਜਾ
ਭਰਥਰੀ ਰਾਜ ਸੁਨੇਰਵਾ ਦਾ
ਸਾਵਣਯਾਰ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਰਾਜ ਤੇਰਾ
ਜੀਕੂੰ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਹੰਸ ਪੁਕੈਰਵਾਂ ਦਾ

. . .

[1] ਸਿੱਖ ਰੈਫਰੈਂਸ ਲਾਇਬ੍ਰੇਰੀ, ਹੱਥ-ਲਿਖਤ ਨੰ: 2428 , 19 ਅਤੇ 453.

ਹੇ ਹਾਥੀਆਂ ਘੋੜਿਆਂ ਦਾਨ ਕਰਦਾ
ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹ ਧਾਰੀ
ਚਾਹੇ ਆਜਿਜ਼ ਨੂੰ ਬਹੁਤ ਦਾਨ ਦੇਵ
ਬਖਸ਼ੇ ਮੁਲਖ ਜਗੀਰ ਤੇ ਫ਼ੌਜ ਭਾਰੀ
ਸਦਾਵਰਤ ਛਬੀਲ ਤੇ ਪੁੰਨ ਲਾਏ
ਗੱਲ ਪਈ ਸੁ ਧਰਮ ਦੀ ਲੱਜ ਭਾਰੀ
ਸਾਵਣਯਾਰ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਰਾਜ ਤੇਰਾ
ਪਰਜਾ ਸੁਖੀ ਵਸੇ ਪਈ ਸਭ ਸਾਰੀ

ਕਵੀ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਕਲ ਦਾ ਚਤੁਰ ਨਿਪੁੰਨ ਸਿਆਸਤਦਾਨ ਅਤੇ ਦੂਰ-ਅੰਦੇਸ਼ ਸੀ। ਉਸਦਾ ਖਿਆਲ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਰਾਜ ਬਾਰੇ ਜਿਹੜੀਦਾਂ ਗੋਆਂ ਅੰਗ੍ਰੇਜ਼ ਦਿੱਲੀ ਵਿਚ ਗੁੰਦਦੇ ਸਨ, ਉਹ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਆਪਣੀ ਦੂਰ ਅੰਦੇਸ਼ ਸੋਚਣੀ ਨਾਲ ਤੁਰਤ ਜਾਣ ਲੈਂਦਾ ਸੀ :

ਗੈਨ ਗੈਬ ਦੇ ਇਲਮ ਮਲੂਮ ਤੈਨੂੰ
ਸਭ ਬੇਦ ਕਤੇਬਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਜਾਣਦਾ ਏ
ਰਿਗ ਸਮ ਤੇ ਜੁਜਰ ਤੇ ਬੇਦ ਚਾਰੇ
ਅੱਖਰੀਂ ਬੇਦ ਪੁਰਾਨ ਦਾ ਏ
ਦਿੱਲੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਦਲੀਲ ਜੇ ਮਿਥੇ ਕੋਈ
ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਤੁਰਤ ਪਛਾਣਦਾ ਏ
ਸਾਵਣਯਾਰ ਨਿਵਾਈਆਂ ਨੀ ਚਾਰ ਕੂੰਟਾ
ਜਿਵੇਂ ਗੋਸ਼ਾ ਅਸੀਲ ਕਮਾਨ ਦਾ ਏ

ਇਕ ਵਿਲੱਖਣ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਗੱਲ ਜਿਸ ਦਾ ਹਵਾਲਾ ਹੋਰ ਕਿਸੇ ਤਤਕਾਲੀ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਲਿਖਤ ਵਿਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਲੱਭਦਾ, ਉਹ ਹੈ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ 'ਮੋਰਾਂ' ਨਾਲ ਇਸ਼ਕ ਬਾਰੇ ਚਰਚਾ ਸੀਹਰਫ਼ੀ ਦੇ 30 ਬੰਦਾਂ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ 10 ਬੰਦ ਕਵੀ ਇਸ ਵਿਸ਼ੇ ਦੇ ਸਪੁਰਦ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਮਿਸਾਲ ਵਜੋਂ :

ਫ਼ੇ ਫ਼ੇਰ ਆਇਆ ਇਕ ਵਹਿਮ ਮਨੂੰ
ਕਰਾਂ ਇਸ਼ਕ ਦੇ ਵੱਲ ਧਿਆਨ ਸਾਰਾ
ਰਾਜਾ ਆਸ਼ਿਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਵਿਚ ਆਸ਼ਿਕ ਹੈਗਾ
ਜੈਂਦਾ ਇਸ਼ਕ ਦੇ ਵੱਲ ਧਿਆਨ ਸਾਰਾ
ਮੋਰਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਜੋ ਲਾਈਆਂ ਨੀ
ਜਾਣੇ ਪ੍ਰਿਥਵੀ ਜਗ ਜ਼ਹਾਨ ਸਾਰਾ

ਸਾਵਣਯਾਰ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਆਸ਼ਿਕਾਂ ਬੀ',
ਓਹ ਭੀ ਆਸ਼ਿਕ ਵਿਚ ਜਹਾਨ ਭਾਰਾ ।[2]

ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਜਦ ਇਕ ਸ਼ਕਤੀਸ਼ਾਲੀ ਹਾਕਮ ਵਜੋਂ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਨਕਸ਼ ਤੇ ਉਭੱਰਿਆ ਤਾਂ ਉਸਨੇ ਆਪਣਾ ਰਾਜ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਕੁਸ਼ਲਤਾ ਸਹਿਤ ਚਲਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਅਤੇ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਦੇ ਦਾਅ ਪੇਚ ਸਿਖਣ ਦੀ ਤਮੰਨਾ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਕੀਤੀ । ਉਸਦੀ ਇਸ ਖਾਹਿਸ਼ ਦੀ ਪੂਰਤੀ ਬੁੱਧ ਸਿੰਘ ਲਾਹੌਰੀ ਨੇ ਮਹਾਰਾਜੇ ਦੀ ਫ਼ਰਮਾਇਸ਼ ਤੇ ਅਯਾਰਿ-ਦਾਨਿਸ਼ ਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਫ਼ਾਰਸੀ ਪੁਸਤਕ ਦਾ ਬ੍ਰਜੀ ਮਿਸ਼ਿਤ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਵਿਚ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਕਰਕੇ ਪੂਰੀ ਕੀਤੀ (ਰਚਨਾ ਕਾਲ 1811 ਈ.) । ਇਹ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਰਾਜੇ ਅਤੇ ਮੰਤ੍ਰੀਆ ਦੇ ਤਰਕ ਵਿਤਰਕ, ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਦੇ ਦਾਅਪੇਚਾਂ, ਦੁਸ਼ਮਣਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਹਰਾਉਣ, ਜਨਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਨਾਲ ਰੱਖਣ ਅਤੇ ਜੰਗੀ ਕਰਤਬਾ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਆਦਿ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਹੈ । ਮਹਾਰਾਜੇ ਦੀ ਕਵੀ ਨੂੰ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ ਫ਼ਰਮਾਇਸ਼ ਅਤੇ ਉਸ ਦੀ ਪੂਰਤੀ ਲੇਖਕ ਦੀ ਆਪਣੀ ਜ਼ਬਾਨੀ ਸੁਣੋ :

ਮਹਾਂ ਸਿੰਘ ਨਿਪਬਰ ਗ੍ਰਿਹ ਨੰਦ, ਪ੍ਰਗਟਯੋ ਉਦਰ ਸਦਨ ਜਯੋ ਚੰਦ
ਸ੍ਰੀ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੁ ਨਾਮ, ਜਿਹਿ ਜਗ ਜੀਤਿ ਕਰਯੋ ਸੁ ਗੁਲਾਮ
ਲਵਪੁਰ ਮਹਿ ਜ਼ਾਕੀ ਰਜਧਾਨੀ, ਤੇਜਵੰਤ ਬਲਵੰਤ ਮਹਾਨੀ
ਤਾ ਨ੍ਰਿਪ ਮੋਹਿ ਬੁਲਾਇ ਕੇ, ਕੀਨੋ ਬਹੁ ਸਨਮਾਨ
ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿ ਕੀ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿ ਜਬ, ਚੀਤ ਚਢੀ ਅਤਿਮਾਨ
ਕਹਾ ਸੁਖਨ ਸੁਖ ਸੁ ਬਿਗਸਾਇ, ਸਭਾ ਸੁਭਹ ਜਹ ਰਹੀ ਸਹਾਇ
ਬੁਧਿ ਬਰਿਧਿ ਜੁ ਨੀਤਿ ਕਹਾਵਤਿ, ਕਵਿ ਕੁਲ ਜਾ ਕੀ ਕੀਰਤਿ ਗਾਵਤ
ਨਾਮ ਅਯਾਰ ਦਾਨਸਹਿ ਜ਼ਾਸ, ਸੋ ਭਾਖਾ ਅਬ ਕਰੋ ਸੁ ਰਾਮ
ਸੁਨ ਨ੍ਰਿਪ ਬੈਨ ਐਨ ਚਿਤ ਧਾਰਿ, ਭਾਖਾ ਤਾਕੀ ਕਰੀ ਸੁਣਾਰਿ
ਬੁਧਿ ਬਰਿਧਿ ਪੋਥੀ ਕਾ ਨਾਉ, ਰਾਖਾ ਚੀਤ ਮੁਹਿ ਚਢਾ ਸੁ ਚਾਉ
ਦੋਹਾ ਅਰੁ ਚੌਪਈ ਬਨਾਈ, ਹੁਤੀ ਫ਼ਾਰਸੀ ਮਹਿ ਜੋ ਭਾਈ
ਤਾਹੀ ਮੈ ਕਵਿ ਬੁਧ ਸਿੰਘ ਨਾਮ, ਭਾਖਾ ਜਾਹਿ ਕਰੀ ਅਭਿਰਾਮ[3]

ਅਹਿਮਦਯਾਰ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਕਾਲ ਦਾ ਇਕ ਬਹੁ-ਵਿਸਤਾਰੀ ਤੇ ਬਹੁ-ਪ੍ਰਕਾਰੀ ਕਵੀ ਕਰਕੇ ਜਾਣਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ । ਇਸ ਕਵੀ ਦੀਆਂ 50 ਕ ਰਚਨਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਇਕ ਹਾਤਮਨਾਮਾ (ਰਚਨਾ ਕਾਲ 1820 ਈ.) ਵੀ ਸ਼ਾਮਿਲ ਹੈ । ਅਹਿਮਦਯਾਰ ਨੇ ਇਹ ਕਿੱਸਾ ਮਹਾਰਾਜੇ ਪਾਸੋਂ 'ਇਨਾਮ ਮੰਗਣ ਖਾਤਿਰ ਲਿਖਿਆ'[4] ਇਕ ਹਾਤਮਨਾਮਾ ਮਹਾਰਾਜ ਦੀ ਲਾਇਬ੍ਰੇਰੀ

[2] ਪੰਜਾਬ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ, ਚੰਡੀਗੜ੍ਹ ਹੱਥ-ਲਿਖਤ ਨੰ: 853.

[3] ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ, ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ ਹੱਥ-ਲਿਖਤ ਨੰ: 194, 16-17.

[4] "ਹਾਤਿਮਨਾਮਾ," 253 :

ਅਸਾਂ ਇਨਾਮ ਮੰਗਣ ਦੀ ਖਾਤਰ,
ਤੁਹਫਾ ਏਹ ਬਣਾਇਆ ।

ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਪਿਆ ਦਸਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਜੇ ਇਹ ਹਾਤਮਨਾਮਾ ਅਹਿਮਦਯਾਰ ਵਾਲਾ ਹੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਲੇਖਕ ਨੂੰ ਮਹਾਰਾਜੇ ਪਾਸੋਂ ਇਨਾਮ ਰੂਪ ਕੁਝ ਨ ਕੁਝ ਜ਼ਰੂਰ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ। ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਮਤਲਬ ਅਹਿਮਦਯਾਰ ਦੀਆਂ, ਸਤਰਾਂ ਇਸਤਰਾਂ ਹਨ :

ਇਹ ਤਹਿਰੀਰ ਜੋ ਮੈਂ ਲਿਖੀ, ਮਿਹਨਤ ਕਿਸੇ ਘਰ ਦੀ
ਖਾਹਿਸ਼ ਦੀ ਫ਼ਰਮਾਇਸ਼ ਹੋਈ, ਰਾਜੇ ਬਖਤਾਵਰ ਦੀ
ਹਾਤਮ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਕਿੱਸਾ ਸੁਣ ਕੇ, ਹਾਤਮ ਦੇ ਰਾਹ ਚਲੇ
ਥੋੜਾ ਬਹੁਤ ਨਾਮ ਖੁਦਾ ਦੇ, ਦੇਵੇ ਜੋ ਕੁਝ ਪੱਲੇ
ਅਟਕੋਂ ਤੇ ਮੁਲਤਾਨੋਂ ਚੜ੍ਹਦੇ, ਤਾ ਜਮਨਾ ਧਾਏ
ਤਾ ਤੇ ਰਾਜ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ, ਜਾਂ ਲਿਖ ਕੀਤੀ ਆਹੇ।[5]

ਫਤਹਿਨਾਮਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਜੀ ਕਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਬਾਰੇ ਇਕ ਕੀਮਤੀ ਸਮਕਾਲੀ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਮੁਲਤਾਨ ਦੀ ਫਤਹਿ (1818 ਈ.), ਪਿਸ਼ੌਰ ਯੁੱਧ (1823 ਈ.) ਅਤੇ ਸੈਦੋਵਾਲ (1827 ਈ.) ਦੀਆਂ ਤਿੰਨ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਣ ਅਤੇ ਫੈਸਲਾਕੁਨ ਮੁਹਿੰਮਾਂ ਦਾ ਤਿੰਨ ਵੱਖੋ ਵਖਰੇ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਜ਼ਿਕਰ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਰਚਨਾ ਦੀ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਣਿਕਤਾ ਬਾਰੇ ਸੀਤਾ ਰਾਮ ਕੋਹਲੀ ਨੇ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਹੈ, 'ਮੁੱਕਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਇਹ ਕਿ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀਕੋਣ ਤੋਂ ਵੇਖਿਆ ਜਾਵੇ ਅਤੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਕਸਵੱਟੀ ਤੇ ਪਰਖ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾਵੇ, ਗਣੇਸ਼ ਦਾਸ ਦੀ ਇਹ ਰਚਨਾ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਲਿਹਾਜ਼ ਨਾਲ ਠੀਕ ਅਤੇ ਮੰਨਣਯੋਗ ਸਾਬਤ ਹੋਵੇਗੀ। ਮੈਂ ਇਸ ਕਾਵਿ ਸੰਗ੍ਰਹਿ ਨੂੰ ਇਕ ਅਹਿਮ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਮਸੌਦਾ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਗੋਂ ਕੌਮੀ ਪੂੰਜੀ ਖ਼ਿਆਲ ਕਰਦਾ ਹਾਂ। ਸੱਚ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਰਚਨਾ ਪੜ੍ਹਦਿਆਂ ਮੇਰੀਆਂ ਨਜ਼ਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਗੀਤਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਭੱਟਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਲਿਖਤਾਂ ਦੀ ਕਦਰ ਬਹੁਤ ਵਧ ਗਈ ਹੈ'।[6] ਇਸ ਰਚਨਾ ਵਿਚ ਇਕ ਬੰਦ ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਚਲਦਾ ਹੈ :

ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਆਪ, ਦੀਨੋ ਬਡੋ ਪਰਤਾਪ
ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਥਾਪ, ਜੋਤ ਆਪਣੀ ਸੁ ਪਾਇਕੈ
ਪ੍ਰਿਥਮ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਜੀਤ, ਨੀਤ ਮੈਂ ਪ੍ਰਬੀਨ ਭਏ
ਕਾਂਗੜੇ ਕਾ ਕੋਟ, ਦੇਵੀ ਦੀਓ ਹਰਖਾਇ ਕੈ
ਅਟਕ ਪਟਕ ਦੈ ਸੁ ਲੀਨੀ ਦੇਰ ਕੀਨੀ ਨਾਹਿ
ਮਾਰ ਮੁਲਤਾਨ ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰ ਲੀਆ ਧਾਇ ਕੇ
ਪਾਛੇ ਕਰੀ ਦੋਰ ਸੁ ਪਸ਼ੌਰ ਮਾਰ ਲਏ ਹਏ
ਅਬ ਚੜ੍ਹੇ ਸਭ ਸਿੰਘ ਮਨ ਮੈ ਖੁਨਸਾਇ ਕੇ[7]

[5] "ਹਾਤਿਮਨਾਮਾ", 253.

[6] "ਫਤਹਿਨਾਮਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਖ਼ਾਲਸਾ ਜੀ ਕਾ" (ਸੰਪਾ. ਸੀਤਾ ਰਾਮ ਕੋਹਲੀ), ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਭਾਗ, ਪੰਜਾਬ, ਪਟਿਆਲਾ (ਦੂਜੀ ਵਾਰ), 1970, 24.

[7] ਉਹੀ, 157-58.

ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਬਾਰੇ ਲਿਖਣ ਵਾਲਾ ਅਗਲਾ ਕਵੀ ਪੂਰਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਨੇ ਵੀ ਮਹਾਰਾਜੇ ਦੀਆਂ ਸਫਲਤਾਵਾਂ ਦਾ ਜ਼ਿਕਰ ਬੜੇ ਵੇਰਵੇ ਨਾਲ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਮੁਹਿੰਮਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਸ਼ਰੀਕ ਕਈ ਵਿਅਕਤੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਅਤਾ ਪਤਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ। ਕਵੀ ਪੂਰਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗ, ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਨਿਮਨ-ਲਿਖਤ ਹਵਾਲਾ ਉਧਰਿਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ, 1833 ਈ. ਦੀ ਰਚਨਾ ਹੈ। ਬੰਦ ਇਹ ਹੈ :

ਜੀਤਿਓ ਮੁਲਤਾਨ ਮਨਕੇਰਾ ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰ ਜੀਤ,
ਭਾਜ ਗਇਓ ਫੱਤਾ ਲੜਿਆ ਅਟਕ ਕੇ ਪਇਆਨੇ ਪੈ
ਸਿੰਧ ਦੀਓ ਗਾਹਨ ਤੇ ਟੇਰੀ ਪਰ ਜੁਧ ਕੀਓ
ਭਾਜਿਓ ਅਜੀਮ ਲਾਜ ਲਾਗੀ ਤੁਰਕਾਨੇ ਪੈ
ਪਾਛੇ ਜਗੀਰੇ ਬੁਧ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਾਥ ਜੁਧ ਕੀਓ
ਭਾਜੇ ਮੁਲਖਈਐ ਛੋਡ ਜਾਰਤਾ ਪਛਾਨੇ ਪੈ
ਪੂਰਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਕੀ ਬਿਨੰਤੀ ਸੁਣ ਦੂਲੋ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ
ਕਾਹੇ ਕੋ ਕਰਤ ਕੋਪ ਕਾਬਲੀ ਕੁਤਾਨੇ ਪੈ।[8]

ਅਗਲੇਰੀ ਰਚਨਾ ਸੀਹਰਫੀ ਜੰਗਨਾਮ ਹਰੀ ਸਿੰਘ ਕੀ (1837 ਈ.) ਹਾਕਿਮ ਸਿਘ ਦਰਵੇਸ਼ ਦੀ ਰਚਨਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਸੀਹਰਫੀ ਕਈਆਂ ਪੱਖਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਬਹੁਤ ਅਹਿਮੀਅਤ ਵਾਲੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਦਾ ਕਰਤਾ ਮਹਾਰਾਜੇ ਦੀ ਫੌਜ ਵਿਚ ਨੌਕਰ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਇਸਦਾ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਗੁਲਾਬ ਸਿੰਘ ਪੋਹੂਵਿੰਡੀਏ ਦੇ ਡੇਰੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੀ।[9] ਫੌਜੀ ਹੋਣ ਦੇ ਨਾਤੇ ਲੇਖਕ ਨੇ 1818 ਈ. ਵਿਚ ਹੋਏ ਮੁਲਤਾਨ ਯੁੱਧ ਵਿਚ ਭਾਗ ਲਿਆ ਜਿਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਹ ਕਈ ਚਸ਼ਮਦੀਦ ਘਟਨਾਵਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਪ੍ਰਮੁੱਖ ਵਿਅਕਤੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਪਰਿਚਯ ਦੇਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਉਕਤ ਮੁਹਿੰਮ ਵਿਚ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਹੋਏ। ਹਰ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਮੁਹਿੰਮਾਂ ਦਾ ਜ਼ਿਕਰ ਇਸ ਰਚਨਾ ਵਿਚ ਆਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਪਿਸ਼ੌਰ, ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰ, ਮੁਲਤਾਨ ਅਤੇ ਮਨਕੇਰੇ ਦੀਆਂ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਉਲੇਖਯੋਗ ਹਨ। ਹਾਕਿਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਰਵੇਸ਼ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀਆਂ ਫ਼ੌਜੀ ਮੁਹਿੰਮਾਂ, ਜੰਗੀ ਇਕਬਾਲ, ਸੈਨਿਕ ਚੜ੍ਹਤ ਅਤੇ ਦੁਸ਼ਮਣਾਂ ਉਪਰ ਪਏ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਬਾਰੇ ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਸਦਾ ਹੈ :

ਸੁਆਦ ਸਾਬਤ ਹੋਇ ਕੇ ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹ ਨੇ, ਫੌਜਾਂ ਚਾੜ੍ਹੀਆਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਮਨਾਇਕੇ ਜੀ
ਲਿਆ ਘੇਰ ਮਨਕੇਰੇ ਨੂੰ ਜਾਇ ਫੌਜੀ, ਚਾਰੋਂ ਤਰਫ ਵਲੋਂ ਘੇਰਾ ਪਾਇਕੇ ਜੀ
ਚਲਣ ਰਹਿਕਲੇ ਤੇ ਛੁਟਣ ਰਾਮਜੰਗੇ, ਕੜਕਣ ਬਿਜਲੀਆਂ ਜਿਉਂ ਤੋਪਾਂ ਸਾਇਕ ਜੀ
ਹਾਕਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਮਨਕੇਰੇ ਦਾ ਕਿਲਾ ਕੀਤਾ, ਤੋਪੀਂ ਢਾਹਿ ਮੈਦਾਨ ਉਡਾਇ ਕੇ ਜੀ।[10]

[8] ਸਿੱਖ ਰੈਫਰੈਂਸ ਲਾਇਬ੍ਰੇਰੀ, ਅਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ, ਹੱਥ ਲਿਖਿਤ ਨੰ: 1596, ਪਤੇ ਨੰ: 32, 34.

[9] "ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਦੁਨੀਆ," ਜੂਨ 1952, 31.

[10] ਉਹੀ, 38.

ਅਖੀਰ ਉਤੇ ਕਵੀ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੀ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਹੱਥੋਂ ਯੋਗ ਰਾਹਨੁਮਾਈ ਤੇ ਤਸੱਲੀ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਕਰਦਾ ਉਸਦੇ ਰਾਜ ਦੀ ਚਿਰੰਜੀਵਤਾ ਲਈ ਦੁਆਵਾਂ ਦੇਂਦਾ ਹੈ।

1837 ਈ. ਦੀ ਹੀ ਇਕ ਹੋਰ ਰਚਨਾ ਸੀਹਰਫੀ ਜੰਗਨਾਮਾ ਹਰੀ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਕਾ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਆਪਣ ਫ਼ੌਜੀ ਜਰਨੈਲਾਂ ਪ੍ਰਤਿ ਅਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਮਹਾਰਾਜੇ ਪ੍ਰਤਿ ਪਿਆਰ ਟਪਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਜਦ ਪਿਸ਼ੌਰ ਦੀ ਮੁਹਿੰਮ ਨੂੰ ਸਰ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਜਮਾਂਦਾਰ ਖੁਸ਼ਹਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਮਹਰੀ ਬਣਾਇਆ ਗਿਆ ਤਾਂ ਉਹ ਬੁਜ਼ਦਿਲਾਂ ਵਾਂਗ ਤਰਲੇ ਲੈਣ ਲਗਾ। ਹਰੀ ਸਿੰਘ ਨਲਵੇ ਨੇ ਜਮਾਂਦਾਰ ਦੀ ਤਰਸਯੋਗ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਵੇਖ ਕੇ ਉਹ ਕੰਮ ਭੁਗਤਾਉਣ ਦਾ ਆਪ ਬੀੜਾ ਉਠਾਇਆ ਤਾਂ ਮਹਾਰਾਜੇ ਨੇ ਉਸਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਮੰਨ ਕੇ ਪਿਸ਼ੌਰ ਦੀ ਮੁਹਿੰਮ ਦਾ ਕੰਮ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਸਪੁਰਦ ਕੀਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਹੱਥੀਂ ਤਿਆਰ ਕਰਕੇ ਹਰੀ ਸਿੰਘ ਨਲਵੇ ਨੂੰ ਜੰਗ ਦੇ ਮੈਦਾਨ ਵਲ ਤੋਰਿਆ :

ਜੀਮ ਜਾਣ ਕੇ ਬਹੁਤ ਹੀ ਸੂਰ ਭਾਰਾ
ਕਰੀ ਗੌਰ ਤੇ ਪਾਸ ਬੈਠਾਇਆ ਈ
ਖੁਸ਼ੀ ਹੋਇ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਲਾਈ ਕਲਗੀ
ਜਿਗਾ ਢਾਲ ਤਲਵਾਰ ਅਣਵਾਇਆ ਈ
ਸਿਰੋਪਾਇ ਦੇ ਕੇ ਕਹਿਆ ਜਾਉ ਭਯਾ
ਹਰੀ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਫਤਹਿ ਬੁਲਾਇਆ ਈ
ਗੁਰਮੁਖ ਸਿੰਘ ਚੜ੍ਹਿਆ ਹਰੀ ਸਿੰਘ ਰਾਜਾ
ਸਭੀ ਤੋਰਕੀ ਫੌਜ ਡਰਾਇਆ ਈ।[11]

ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਬਾਰੇ ਲਿਖੀ ਗਈ ਤਤਕਾਲੀ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਕਵਿਤਾ ਵਿਚ ਆਖਰੀ ਰਚਨਾ ਜ਼ਾਫਰ ਬੇਗ ਦੀ ਬੈਂਤਾਂ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਕੀਆਂ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਦਾ ਰਚਨਾ ਕਾਲ 1840 ਈ. ਮੰਨਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ।[12] ਚਰਚਾਧੀਨ ਰਚਨਾ ਮੁੱਢਲੇ ਤੌਰ ਉੱਤੇ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਅੰਤਿਮ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੇ ਕਿਰਿਆ ਕਰਮ ਬਾਰੇ ਹੈ, ਇਸ ਲਈ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀਆਂ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀਆਂ ਵਗੈਰਾ ਦਾ ਜ਼ਿਕਰ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਵਿਸਥਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਜਾ ਕੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋ ਸਕਿਆ, ਪਰ ਉਸ ਦੀ ਮੌਤ ਸੰਬੰਧੀ ਅਨੋਖੇ ਤੱਥ ਸਾਮ੍ਹਣੇ ਜ਼ਰੂਰ ਲਿਆਂਦੇ ਗਏ ਹਨ। ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਵਿਚ ਜ਼ਿਕਰ ਆਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਮੌਤ ਅਧਰੰਗ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੋਈ। ਜ਼ਾਫਰ ਬੇਗ ਇਸ ਬੀਮਾਰੀ ਦਾ ਕਾਰਨ ਇਹ ਦਸਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਜਦ ਬਰਤਾਨਵੀ ਫ਼ੌਜਾਂ ਦਾ ਕਮਾਂਡਰ-ਇਨ-ਚੀਫ ਸਰ ਹੈਨਰੀ ਫੇਨ ਕੰਵਰ ਨੌਨਿਹਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਾਦੀ ਵਿਚ ਸ਼ਰੀਕ ਹੋਣ ਲਈ ਆਇਆ ਤਾਂ ਲਾਹੌਰ ਦੇ ਸ਼ਾਲਾਮਾਰ ਬਾਗ ਵਿਚ ਇਕ ਬਹੁਤ ਵਡਾ ਜਸ਼ਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ। ਇਸ ਮੌਕੇ ਤੇ ਸ਼ਰਾਬ ਦੇ ਦੌਰ ਚਲੇ ਤੇ ਕੂਟਨੀਤਿੱਗ ਅੰਗ੍ਰੇਜ਼ ਜੁੰਡਲੀ ਨੇ ਦਗੇਬਾਜ਼ੀ ਦਾ ਸਹਾਰਾ ਲੈਂਦਿਆਂ ਸ਼ਰਾਬ

[11] ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ, ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ ਹੱਥ ਲਿਖਿਤ ਨੰ: 5006.

[12] "ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਦੁਨੀਆ" ਜੂਨ 1952, 57.

ਵਿਚ ਕੋਈ ਅਜੇਹੀ ਦੁਆਈ ਰਲਾ ਦਿਤੀ ਜਿਸਨੂੰ ਪੀਂਦਿਆਂ ਸਾਰ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਉਥੇ ਹੀ ਬੇਹੋਸ਼ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ :

ਖੇ ਖਾਸ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੇ ਪਾਸ ਬਹਿ ਕੇ, ਜੰਗੀ ਲਾਟ ਨੇ ਬੈਠ ਜਵਾਬ ਕੀਤਾ
ਸੀਸੇ ਖੋਲ ਕੇ ਤਿਸਮ ਫਿਰੰਗ ਵਾਲੇ, ਲਾਟ ਬੈਠ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਸ਼ਰਾਬ ਪੀਤਾ
ਦਾਰੂ ਤੇਜ਼ ਅੰਗ੍ਰੇਜ਼ ਫਿਰੰਗ ਵਾਲੀ, ਪੀਂਦੇ ਸਾਰ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਬੇਹੋਸ਼ ਕੀਤਾ
ਜਾਫਰ ਬੇਗ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦਾ ਨਿਮਖ ਖਾ ਕੇ, ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਜ਼ਾਲਮਾਂ ਬੇਇਨਸਾਫ ਕੀਤਾ
ਦਾਲ ਦਗਾ ਫਿਰੰਗੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਵਡਾ, ਆਕਿਲ ਆਖਦੇ ਆਦਿ ਜੁਗਾਦਿ ਸਾਰੇ
ਦਗੇ ਨਾਲ ਲਿਆ ਦਿੱਲੀ ਤਖਤ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ, ਦਗੇ ਨਾਲ ਲਏ ਕਿਲੇ ਕੋਟ ਭਾਰੇ
ਅੰਤ ਨਾਲ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੇ ਦਗਾ ਕੀਤਾ, ਬਣੇ ਬਹੁਤ ਮਹਾਰਾਜ ਦੇ ਖਾਸ ਪਿਆਰੇ
ਜਾਫਰ ਬੇਗ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਸ਼ੀਦ ਕੀਤਾ, ਰਹੇ ਪਾਸ ਅੰਬੀਰ ਮੁਸਾਹਬ ਸਾਰੇ

ਮਹਾਰਾਜੇ ਦੀ ਮੌਤ ਉਤੇ ਜਾਫਰ ਬੇਗ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਤਿਕਰਮ ਇਸਤਰਾਂ ਹੈ :

ਕਾਫ ਕਰਕੇ ਬਹੁਤ ਅਗਰ ਚੰਦਨ ਕੱਠਾ, ਚਿਖਾ ਫੂਕ ਸੁ ਬਾਗ ਦੇ ਵਿਚ
ਬਨਿਆ ਬਿਬਾਨ ਸੁੰਦਰ ਜੈਸੇ ਬੈਦ ਰੀਤੀ, ਜ਼ਰੀ ਬਾਦਲਾ ਦੁਸ਼ਾਲੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੁਧ ਕਾਈ
ਚਿਖਾ ਚਾੜ ਲਾਂਬੂ ਚੁੱਕ ਲਾਇਓ ਨੇ, ਗਇਓ ਸੁਰਗ ਨੂੰ ਤੁਰਤ ਹੀ ਕਰੀ ਧਾਈ
ਜਾਫ਼ਰ ਬੇਗ ਜਹਾਨ ਵਿਚ ਪਿਆ ਰੌਲਾ, ਅਜ ਉਲਟ ਗਈ ਹਿੰਦ ਦੀ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ[13]

ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਬਾਰੇ ਹਿੰਦੂ, ਸਿਖ ਅਤੇ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ਕਵੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਦਿਲ ਖੋਲ੍ਹ ਕੇ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਜਿਸ ਤੋਂ ਪਤਾ ਲਗਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਸਮਾਜ ਦੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਤਬਕਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਬਰਾਬਰ ਦਾ ਲੋਕ-ਪ੍ਰਿਯ ਸੀ ।

[13] "ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਦੁਨਿਆਂ", ਜੂਨ 1952,

ਕਿਰਪਾ ਸਾਗਰ ਦੀਆਂ ਰਚਨਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ

ਮਨਜੀਤ ਪਾਲ ਗਿੱਲ*

ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ਾਂ ਦੀ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਉੱਪਰ ਜਿੱਤ ਮਗਰੋਂ ਇਸਦੇ ਵਗੋਚੇ ਨੂੰ ਕਈ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ। ਜੰਗਨਾਮਾ, ਸਿੰਘਾਂ 'ਤੇ ਫਰੰਗੀਆਂ ਦਾ' ਵਿਚ ਸ਼ਾਹ ਮੁਹੰਮਦ ਨੇ ਮੋਮਨ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ਹੋਣ ਦੇ ਬਾਵਜੂਦ ਸਿੱਖ ਫ਼ੌਜਾਂ ਦੀ ਹਾਰ 'ਤੇ ਡੂੰਘਾ ਰੁਦਣ ਕੀਤਾ ਜੋ ਸੁਤੇ ਸਿੱਧ ਪੜ੍ਹਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਦੀ ਸਿਮਰਿਤੀ ਵਿਚ ਬੈਠ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਰੁਦਣ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਉਹ ਪੰਜਾਬੀਅਤ ਦਾ ਅਜੇਹਾ ਮੁੱਦਈ ਸਿੱਧ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਜਿਸਦੀ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਭਾਵਨਾ ਵਿਚ ਧਰਮ ਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਰਾਜ ਦੀ ਸਥਾਪਨਾ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਦਾ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਤੇ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨਾਂ ਵਿਚਲਾ ਵੈਰ-ਵਿਰੋਧ ਕਿਸੇ ਕਿਸਮ ਦਾ ਵਿਗਾੜ ਪੈਦਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਦਾ। ਸਦੀਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਤੋਂ ਪੱਛਮ ਵਲ ਦੇ ਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਮਨਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਬੈਠੀ ਸ਼ਰਧਾ ਤੇ ਕੋਈ ਮਾਰੂ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਨਹੀਂ ਪੈਂਦਾ।

ਵੀਹਵੀਂ ਸਦੀ ਵਿਚ ਆ ਕੇ ਇਹੋ ਜਹੀ ਸ਼ੁੱਧ ਪੰਜਾਬੀਅਤ ਦਾ ਸਮਰਥਕ ਹੋਣ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਲਾਲਾ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਸਾਗਰ ਦੀਆਂ ਲਿਖਤਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਪੈਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਸਦੀਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਪੂਰਬ ਵਲ ਦੇ ਭਾਰਤ ਨਾਲ ਵਿਕਸਤ ਹੋਈ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਹਿੰਦੂਆਂ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਰਧਾ ਵੀ ਉਸਨੂੰ ਸ਼ੁੱਧ ਪੰਜਾਬੀਅਤ ਦਾ ਸਮਰਥਕ ਬਣਨੋ ਮੋੜ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਕਦੀ। ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਦੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਨਾ ਕਿਸੇ ਪੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੀਆਂ ਰਚਨਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਕੇਂਦਰੀ ਸਥਾਨ ਪਰਦਾਨ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਹ ਸੁਤੇ ਸਿੱਧ ਹੀ ਆਪਣੀ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਭਾਵਨਾ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਣ ਦੇ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਜੰਮੂ ਦੀ ਜਿੱਤ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਉਹ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਗਲਤੀ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਦਾ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਇਲਾਕਾਈ ਭਾਵਨਾ ਅਧੀਨ ਉਸ ਲਈ ਅਜੇਹਾ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਕਰਨਾ ਸੁਭਾਵਕ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਸੀ। ਉਸਦਾ ਇਹ ਮੰਤਵ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਭਾ ਆਦਿ ਕਿਸੇ ਰਾਜਸੀ ਜਾਂ ਅਰਧ-ਰਾਜਸੀ ਲਹਿਰ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਤੱਖ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਅਧੀਨ ਆਉਣ ਤੋਂ ਬਿਨਾਂ ਹੀ ਪੂਰਾ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਜੰਮੂ ਦੇ ਜੰਮਪਲ ਤੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਹਿਤੈਸ਼ੀ ਲਾਲਾ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਸਾਗਰ ਦੀਆਂ ਸਾਰੀਆਂ ਲਿਖਤਾਂ ਦਾ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨਾਲ ਪਰੋਖ ਜਾਂ ਅਪਰੋਖ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਹੈ। ਜੰਮੂ ਦਾ

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ਜੰਮਪਲ ਹੋਣ ਦੇ ਨਾਤੇ ਉਹ ਆਪਣੀ ਮਾਤ-ਭੂਮੀ ਵਲ ਅਥਾਹ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਦਰਸਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਪਰੰਤੂ ਇਸਦਾ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਰਾਜ ਵਿਚ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਹੋ ਜਾਣਾ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਲੋਕ ਵਿਰੋਧੀ ਤੇ ਦੇਸ਼ ਵਿਰੋਧੀ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੁੰਦਾ। ਉਹ ਇਸਨੂੰ ਲੋਕ-ਭਾਵੀ ਦੇਸ਼-ਭਾਵੀ ਗੱਲ ਸਮਝਦਾ ਹੈ, ਉਸਦੇ ਇਸ ਵਿਰੋਧਾਭਾਸੀ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀਕੋਣ ਦੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਲੇਸ਼ਣ ਤੋਂ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਖਸੀਅਤ ਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਰਾਜ ਦੀ ਸਮਰੱਥਾ ਦਾ ਕਾਫ਼ੀ ਅਨੁਮਾਨ ਲਗ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਲਾਲਾ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਸਾਗਰ ਦੇ ਬਿਰਤਾਂਤਿਕ ਕਾਵਿ **ਲਕਸ਼ਮੀ ਦੇਵੀ** ਦਾ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਵਾਸਤਾ ਬਿੰਦਰਾਲ ਦੇਸ਼ ਦੀ ਸੁੰਦਰਤਾ ਤੇ ਰਮਣੀਕਤਾ ਨਾਲ ਹੈ। ਇਉਂ ਲਗਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਭੂਗੋਲਕ ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਾਕਿਰਤਕ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਉਸਨੂੰ ਜੰਮੂ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਬਿਲਕੁਲ ਵੱਖ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਤ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਕ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਉਹ ਦੋਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਕ ਦੂਜੇ ਤੋਂ ਇੰਨਾ ਵੱਖ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਮਝਦਾ। ਮੁਸੀਬਤ ਪੈਣ ਤੇ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਹੀ ਦਰਬਾਰੀ ਜੰਮੂ ਵਿਚ ਜਾ ਪਨਾਹ ਲੈਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਵਧੇਰੇ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਪਨਾਹ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਉਦੋਂ ਪੈਂਦੀ ਹੈ ਜਦੋਂ ਮਹਾਰਾਜ ਨਾਲ ਨੇੜਤਾ ਖ਼ਤਮ ਹੋ ਚੁੱਕੀ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਸਬੰਧ ਵਿਚ ਬਲਬੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਇਹ ਉਲਾਂਭਾ ਨਿਰਾਰਥਕ ਨਹੀਂ :

ਸੁਣ ਮਹਾਰਾਜ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ, ਤੂੰ ਮੇਰੀ ਸਰਕਾਰ।
ਮੈਂ ਬਲਬੀਰ ਕਦੀਮ ਦਾ, ਤੇਰਾ ਤਾਬੇਦਾਰ।
ਚੁਗਲਾਂ ਕਰ ਕਰ ਨਿੰਦਿਆ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਤੈਨੂੰ ਪਾੜ।[1]

ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਬਲਬੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਵਰਗੇ ਸੂਰਬੀਰ ਵੀ ਆਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਲਘੂ-ਰਾਜਾਂ ਦੇ ਮਾਲਿਕ ਹੋਣ ਦੇ ਬਾਵਜੂਦ ਜੰਮੂ ਦੇ ਰਾਜਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਪਨਾਹਗੀਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪਨਾਹ ਦੇਣ ਦਾ ਸਾਹਸ ਹੈ। ਰਾਜਾ ਜੈਮਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਇਸੇ ਕਾਰਨ ਬਿਨਾ ਕਿਸੇ ਝਿਜਕ ਦੇ ਬਲਬੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਪਨਾਹ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਲਘੂ-ਰਾਜਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਦੂਰ-ਅੰਦੇਸ਼ੀ ਦੀ ਅਣਹੋਂਦ, ਰਾਜਨੀਤਕ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਰਾਜ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇੰਨਾ ਵੱਖ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਤ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਜਿੰਨਾਂ ਬਿੰਦਰਾਲ ਦੇਸ਼ ਦੀ ਸੁੰਦਰਤਾ ਤੇ ਰਮਣੀਕਤਾ ਦਾ ਵਰਨਣ ਜੰਮੂ ਨੂੰ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਵੱਖ ਦਰਸਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਵਾਸਤਵ ਵਿਚ ਇਹ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਭੁਲੇਖਾ ਹੈ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਸਿੱਖ ਰਾਜ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਨੇ ਜੰਮੂ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਵਿਚ ਰਲਾਉਣ ਦੇ ਯਤਨ ਆਰੰਭ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਸਨ। ਇਸ ਗੱਲ ਦਾ ਸੰਕੇਤ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਵੇਸ਼ ਤੋਂ ਮਿਲ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਪੰਜਾਬ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਨਾਮ ਨਾਲ ਉਹ ਇਕ ਭੁਲੇ ਭਟਕੇ ਸ਼ਿਕਾਰੀ ਦੇ ਭੇਸ ਵਿਚ ਸੁੰਦਰ ਤੇ ਰਮਣੀਕ ਬਿੰਦਰਾਲ ਦੇਸ਼ ਆ ਨਿਕਲਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਥੇ ਤਿੰਨ ਗੱਲਾਂ ਧਿਆਨ ਦੇਣ ਯੋਗ ਹਨ। ਪਹਿਲੀ ਇਹ ਕੀ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਨਾਮ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਸਿੰਘ ਹੈ। ਬੇਗਾਨੀ ਧਰਤੀ ਤੇ ਇਸ ਬਦਲਵੇਂ ਨਾਮ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੋ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ। ਪਹਿਚਾਣੇ ਜਾਣੇ ਤੋਂ ਬਚਣ ਲਈ ਉਹ ਇਸ ਤਰਕੀਬ ਤੋਂ ਕੰਮ ਲੈ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਬਦਲਵੇਂ ਨਾਮ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਕਾਤਮਕ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ਤਾ ਵੀ ਹੈ।

[1] 'ਲਕਸ਼ਮੀ ਦੇਵੀ", ਲਾਹੌਰ ਬੁੱਕ ਸ਼ਾਪ, ਲੁਧਿਆਣਾ 1979 (ਪੁਨਰਛਾਪ), 238

ਆਪਣੇ ਆਪ ਨੂੰ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੱਸ ਕੇ ਉਹ ਸਮੁੱਚੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਸਾਕਾਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਜੋਂ ਪੇਸ਼ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਦੂਜੇ ਉਹ ਸ਼ਿਕਾਰੀ ਹੈ, ਭਾਵ ਜੰਮੂ ਰਾਜ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਖ ਰਾਜ ਵਿਚ ਰਲਾਉਣ ਸੰਬੰਧੀ ਉਹ ਉਹੀ ਭਾਵਨਾ ਅਭਿਵਿਅਕਤ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਸ਼ਿਕਾਰੀ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਿਕਾਰ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਹੋ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ। ਤੀਜੇ ਬਿੰਦਰਾਲ ਦੇਸ ਵਿਚ ਪਹੁੰਚਣ ਤੱਕ ਉਸਦੀ ਨਿਸ਼ਚਿਤ ਦੌੜ ਅਨਿਸ਼ਚਿਤ ਭਟਕਣ ਵਿਚ ਤਬਦੀਲ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਤਬਦੀਲੀ ਤੋਂ ਫੇਰ ਲੇਖਕ ਦੀ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਧਾਰਨਾ ਵਲ ਸੰਕੇਤ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਪ੍ਰਕ੍ਰਿਤਕ ਤੇ ਭੂਗੋਲਕ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਤੇ ਜੰਮੂ ਵਿਚਕਾਰ ਜਮੀਨ ਅਸਮਾਨ ਦਾ ਫ਼ਰਕ ਹੈ।

ਭੂਗੋਲਕ ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਕਿਰਤਕ ਭੇਦ ਦੇ ਬਾਵਜੂਦ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਤੇ ਜੰਮੂ ਵਿਚਲੀ ਸਭਿਆਚਾਰਿਕ ਸਾਂਝ ਤੋਂ ਇਨਕਾਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ। ਇਸੇ ਕਾਰਨ ਸ਼ਿਕਾਰੀ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਭਟਕਦੇ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਮੇਲ ਬਲਬੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਲਾਡਲੀ ਬੇਟੀ ਲਕਸ਼ਮੀ ਦੇਵੀ ਨਾਲ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਲਕਸ਼ਮੀ ਦੇਵੀ ਬਿੰਦਰਾਲ ਦੇਸ਼ ਦੀ ਜੰਮਪਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਪਰੰਤੂ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਲਣ ਸਮੇਂ ਉਸਦੀ ਸਮੁੱਚੀ ਸੁੰਦਰਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਸਾਕਾਰ ਕਰਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਤ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਸੁਭਾਵਕ ਹੀ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਲਕਸ਼ਮੀ ਦੇਵੀ ਵਲ ਆਕਰਸ਼ਿਤ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਜਦੋਂ ਉਸਨੂੰ ਪਤਾ ਲਗਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਲਕਸ਼ਮੀ ਦੇਵੀ ਤਾਂ ਉਥੋਂ ਦੇ ਹੀ ਇਕ ਸ਼ਹਿਜ਼ਾਦੇ ਪੂਰਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਨਾਲ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਵਿਆਹ ਲਈ ਉਤਸੁਕ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਉਸਦਾ ਆਕਰਸ਼ਣ ਭਰਾਤਰੀ ਰੂਪ ਗ੍ਰਹਿਣ ਕਰ ਲੈਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਬਿੰਦਰਾਲ ਦੇਸ਼ ਦਾ ਇਕ ਹੋਰ ਰਾਜਾ ਜੈਮਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਲਕਸ਼ਮੀ ਦੇਵੀ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੀ ਪਤਨੀ ਬਨਾਉਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਕੁਦਰਤੀ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਉਸ ਦਾ ਪੂਰਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਨਾਲ ਵੈਰ-ਵਿਰੋਧ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਉਸ ਵੇਲੇ ਦੇ ਜੰਮੂ ਦੀ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਕ ਅਵਸਥਾ ਦਾ ਪਤਾ ਲਗ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਆਕਰਸ਼ਣ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਉੱਭਰੇ ਭਰਾਤਰੀ ਮੋੜ ਤੋਂ ਲਾਲਾ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਸਾਗਰ ਦੀ ਸਦ-ਭਾਵਨਾ ਦਾ ਇਕ ਹੋਰ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਣ ਮਿਲ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਸਦਾਚਾਰਕ ਪੱਖੋਂ ਉਹ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਸੱਚਾ-ਸੁੱਚਾ ਆਦਮੀ ਸਮਝਦਾ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਪਰਾਈ ਇਸਤਰੀ ਵਲ ਪਲ ਭਰ ਲਈ ਵੀ ਮੈਲੀ ਅੱਖ ਨਹੀਂ ਰੱਖਦਾ। ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਚਰਿੱਤਰ ਬਾਬਤ ਅਪਣਾਇਆ ਇਹ ਆਦਰਸ਼ਵਾਦੀ ਨਜ਼ਰੀਆ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਤੱਥ ਗਾਇਬ ਹਨ। ਲਾਲਾ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਸਾਗਰ ਲਈ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਤੱਥਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅੱਖਾਂ ਪਰੋਖੇ ਕਰਨਾ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਸੀ। ਜੇ ਉਹ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਤੱਥਾਂ ਤੇ ਅਧਾਰਿਤ ਚਿਤਰਨ ਕਰਦਾ ਤਾਂ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਤੇ ਜੰਮੂ ਦਲ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਸਪਰ ਏਕਤਾ ਦਾ ਆਧਾਰ ਖ਼ਤਮ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦਾ। ਇਸ ਗੱਲ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਲੇਖਕ ਪੂਰੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਸੁਚੇਤ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਣ Foreword ਤੋਂ ਮਿਲ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ।[2]

2 The author says that the subject matter of his poem is 'therefore entirely new and combines both history and fiction with a nicety of detail and a lofty standard of morality for the edification of all classes of readers of either sex' : "Foreword".

ਪੰਜਾਬ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਜੰਮੂ ਤੋਂ ਚਲੇ ਜਾਣ ਮਗਰੋਂ ਇਹ ਖ਼ਬਰ ਧੰਮ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਵਲੋਂ ਜੰਮੂ ਤੇ ਹਮਲਾ ਹੋਣ ਵਾਲਾ ਹੈ । ਜੇ ਇਹ ਮੰਨ ਲਿਆ ਜਾਵੇ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਮੁਹਿੰਮ ਦਾ ਰਾਜਸੀ ਨਾਲ ਕੋਈ ਸੁਹਜਾਤਮਕ ਮੰਤਵ ਵੀ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਸੀ ਜੋ ਸੰਭਵ ਵੀ ਸੀ ਤਾਂ ਉਸ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਣ ਇਸ ਰਚਨਾ ਵਿਚਲੀਆਂ ਨਿਚਲੀਆਂ ਸਤਰਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਮਿਲ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ :

ਬੈਠ ਸ਼ਿਕਾਰੀ ਉਸ ਥਾਂ, ਦਿਲ ਵਿਚ ਕਰੇ ਖਿਆਲ ।
ਲਾਏ ਏਸ ਉਜਾੜ ਨੂੰ, ਈਸ਼ਰ ਕੇਡੇ ਲਾਲ ॥
ਰਾਜੇ ਇਹ ਥਾਂ ਲੱਭ ਕੇ, ਦੱਸਣ ਆਪਣੀ ਸ਼ਾਨ ।
ਜੋਗੀ ਇਸ ਥਾਂ ਬੈਠਕੇ, ਚੰਗਾ ਜੋਗ ਕਮਾਨ ॥
ਭੋਗੀ ਲਈ ਇਕੱਲ ਇਹ ਭੋਗਨ ਦਾ ਸਮਿਆਨ ।
ਸਭ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਅੱਡਰੀ, ਰਹਿਕੇ ਵਿਚ ਜਹਾਨ ॥
ਉਸ ਮੱਥੇ ਤੇ ਕਿਲਾ ਇਕ, ਚੰਗਾ ਲਵੋ ਉਸਾਰ ।
ਉਸ ਢੱਕੀ ਤੇ ਮਹਿਲ ਇਕ, ਮੱਲ ਸੋਹਣੀ ਨਾਰ ॥
ਅੰਦਰ ਉਸ ਨਿਵਾਨ ਦੇ, ਮੰਦਿਰ ਹੋਵੇ ਤਿਆਰ ।
ਪੜ੍ਹੀਏ ਉੱਠ ਪਰਭਾਤ ਨੂੰ, ਧਰ ਆਸਾ ਦੀ ਵਾਰ ॥[3]

ਵਾਪਸੀ ਤੇ ਹਮਲੇ ਨੂੰ ਨੇੜੇ ਨੇੜੇ ਦਰਸਾ ਕੇ ਲਾਲਾ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਸਾਗਰ ਨੇ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਸੁਘੜਤਾ ਤੇ ਦੂਰ-ਅੰਦੇਸ਼ੀ ਵਲ ਸੰਕੇਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ । ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਭਾਗ ਪਹਿਲਾ ਤੇ ਦੂਜਾ ਵਿਚ ਇਸ ਸੰਕੇਤ ਨੂੰ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਵਿਸਤ੍ਰਿਤ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ । ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਭਾਗ ਪਹਿਲਾ ਵਿਚ ਕਾਂਗੜੇ ਤੱਕ ਦੀਆਂ ਜਿੱਤਾਂ ਦਾ ਵਰਨਣ ਹੈ । ਪੇਂਡੂ ਤੇ ਸ਼ਹਿਰੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਵਿਚ ਵਾਪਰਦੀਆਂ ਨਿੱਕੀਆਂ ਨਿੱਕੀਆਂ ਘਟਨਾਵਾਂ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਉਸ ਦੀ ਲੋਕ-ਪ੍ਰਿਯਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਉਭਾਰਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ । ਜਿਵੇਂ ਸੰਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਸੇਖੋਂ ਨੇ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਹੈ, 'ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਸਾਗਰ ਇੱਕ ਅਜੇਹੇ ਰਾਜੇ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਦੇਖ ਰਿਹਾ ਜੋ ਅਸਲ ਵਿਚ ਜਨਤਾ ਦਾ ਵੈਰੀ ਹੋਵੇ । ਉਹ ਉਸ ਰਾਜੇ ਨੂੰ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਜਨਤਾ ਦੇ ਆਗੂ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਦੇਖ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ...ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਕਿੱਥੋਂ ਤੱਕ ਆਪਣੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੀ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਜਨਤਾ ਦਾ ਆਗੂ ਸੀ ਤੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਕੌਮੀਅਤ ਦਾ ਉਸਾਰੂ, ਇਸ ਬਾਰੇ ਸਚਾਈ ਕੁਝ ਵੀ ਹੋਵੇ, ਲੋਕ-ਭਾਵ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਦੇ ਹੱਕ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਹਨ ' ।[4]

ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਵਿਸ਼ਾ-ਵਸਤੂ ਨਾਲ ਇਸ ਨਾਟਕ ਵਿਚ ਕਲਪਿਤ ਵਿਸ਼ਾ-ਵਸਤੂ ਦੀ ਵੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ ਹੈ । ਨਾਟਕ ਵਿਚ ਨਿੱਕੀਆਂ ਨਿੱਕੀਆਂ ਅਨੇਕ ਅਜੇਹੀਆਂ ਝਾਕੀਆਂ ਹਨ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਪੇਂਡੂ ਲੋਕ, ਸ਼ਹਿਰੀ ਨੌਕਰ-ਚਾਕਰ ਤੇ ਸਰਕਾਰੀ ਅਹਿਲਕਾਰ ਗੱਲਾਂ ਬਾਤਾਂ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ । ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਗੱਲਾਂ ਬਾਤਾਂ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਲੇਖਕ ਦਾ ਮੰਤਵ ਇਹ ਦਰਸਾਉਣਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ

3 "ਲਕਸ਼ਮੀ ਦੇਵੀ", 24.

4 "ਸਾਹਿਤਿਆਰਥ", ਲਾਹੌਰ ਬੁਕ ਸ਼ਾਪ, ਲੁਧਿਆਣਾ 1957, 39.

ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਰਾਜ ਵਿਚ ਕਾਨੂੰਨ ਦੀ ਵਿਵਸਥਾ ਉਹ ਨਹੀਂ ਜੋ ਮੁਗਲ ਤਾਨਾਸ਼ਾਹੀ ਵੇਲੇ ਸੀ। ਪਹਿਲੀ ਧਾਂਦਲੀ ਖਤਮ ਹੋ ਚੁੱਕੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਮੰਤਵ ਵਿਚ ਉਹ ਪੂਰਨ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਸਫਲ ਤਾਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੁੰਦਾਂ ਪ੍ਰੰਤੂ ਇਸ ਨਾਲ ਨਾਟਕ ਦੀ ਇਕਾਗਰਤਾ ਭੰਗ ਵੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੁੰਦੀ। ਇਸ ਪੱਖ ਤੋਂ ਉਸ ਦਾ ਆਪਣਾ ਇਹ ਕਥਨ ਬੇਲੋੜਾ ਨਹੀ :

> ਇਹ ਨਾਟਕ ਬਿਲਕੁਲ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਹੈ। ਵਾਧੂ ਗੱਲਾਂ ਨਿਰੀਆਂ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਰੁੱਖੇਪਣ ਨੂੰ ਦੂਰ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਦੱਸੀਆਂ ਗਈਆਂ ਹਨ।[5]

ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿਘ ਭਾਗ ਦੂਜਾ ਵਿਚ ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਸੁਘੜਤਾ ਤੇ ਦੂਰ-ਅੰਦੇਸ਼ੀ ਨੂੰ ਵੱਖਰੇ ਢੰਗ ਨਾਲ ਉਭਾਰਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀਆਂ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ ਗਵਰਨਰ ਨਾਲ ਮੁਲਾਕਾਤਾਂ ਹੁੰਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਮੁਲਾਕਾਤਾਂ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਮਹਾਰਾਜ ਦੇ ਆਚਰਣ ਦੇ ਵਿਵਿਹਾਰਿਕ ਗੁਣ ਉਭਰਕੇ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਆਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਉਹ ਹਰ ਮੁਲਾਕਾਤ ਵਿਚ ਸੁੱਘੜਤਾ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਣ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਆਪਣੇ ਅਹਿਲਕਾਰਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਪੁੱਛ-ਗਿੱਛ ਉਪਰੰਤ ਹੀ ਉਹ ਕਿਸੇ ਗੱਲ ਬਾਬਤ ਆਪਣੀ ਰਾਏ ਬਣਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਪੁੱਛ-ਗਿੱਛ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਉਹ ਇਕ ਇਕ ਨੁਕਤੇ ਤੇ ਕਈ ਕਈ ਸੁਆਲ ਪੁਛਦਾ ਹੈ। ਸਾਰੇ ਸਰਕਾਰੀ ਖ਼ਤਾਂ ਆਪ ਲਿਖਵਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਵੀ ਅਹਿਸਾਸ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਸ ਦੀ ਪੁੱਛ-ਗਿੱਛ ਤੇ ਨੋਕ-ਝੋਕ ਤੋਂ ਉਹ ਦੇ ਅਹਿਲਕਾਰ ਉਕਤਾ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਸ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਵਿਚ ਉਹ ਪੂਰੀ ਸਾਵਧਾਨੀ ਤੋਂ ਕੰਮ ਲੈਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਅਹਿਲਕਾਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਮਨਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਪ ਲਈ ਖਿੱਚ ਪੈਦਾ ਕਰੀ ਰਖਣ ਲਈ ਉਹ ਸਖ਼ਸ਼ੀ ਗੁਣਾਂ ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਮੰਤਵ ਹਿੱਤ ਉਹ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਪੂਰੀ ਉਦਾਰਤਾ ਨਾਲ ਪੇਸ਼ ਆਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਵਿਚ ਪਿੰਸੀਪਲ ਤੇਜਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਇਹ ਕਥਨ ਕਾਫੀ ਹੱਦ ਤੱਕ ਠੀਕ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਤ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ :

> ਉਸ ਦੇ ਆਚਰਣ ਦੇ ਗੁਣਾਂ ਦਾ ਵੇਰਵਾ ਬੜੀ ਖੋਜ ਨਾਲ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ। ਉਸ ਦੇ ਦਿਲ ਦੀ ਉਦਾਰਤਾ, ਸਿਆਣਪ, ਪੁੱਛ-ਗਿੱਛ ਦਾ ਮਾਦਾ, ਇਕ ਮਿੰਟ ਵਿਚ ਸੌ ਸਵਾਲ ਪੁੱਛਣਾ, ਖਤ ਪੱਤਰ ਆਪ ਲਿਖਵਾਣਾ, ਸਰਦਾਰਾਂ, ਅਹਿਲਕਾਰਾਂ ਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਆਪਣੇ ਲਈ ਖਿਚ ਪੈਦਾ ਕਰੀ ਰਖਣਾ, ਆਦਿ ਸਖਸ਼ੀ ਗੁਣ ਬੜੀ ਚੰਗੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਖੋਲ੍ਹ ਕੇ ਦੱਸੇ ਗਏ ਹਨ।[6]

ਗੱਲ ਕੀ ਰੋਹਬ-ਦਾਬ ਦੀ ਥਾਂ ਉਹ ਸਖ਼ਸ਼ੀ ਗੁਣਾ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨਤਾ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਉਹ ਲੋਕਰਾਜੀ ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹ ਸਿੱਧ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹਤ ਤੇ ਲੋਕਰਾਜੀ ਭਾਵਨਾ ਵਿਚਕਾਰ ਰਤਾ

[5] "ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਭਾਗ ਪਹਿਲਾ", (ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗ) ਫੁਲਵਾੜੀ ਪ੍ਰੈਸ, ਲਾਹੌਰ 1924, 220.

[6] "ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਭਾਗ ਦੂਜਾ", (ਮੁਖ ਬੰਦ) ਮਰਕਨਟਾਈਲ ਪ੍ਰੈਸ, ਲਾਹੌਰ 1928, 9-10.

ਭਰ ਵੀ ਵੈਰ-ਵਿਰੋਧ ਉਤਪਣ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋਣ ਦਿੰਦਾ । ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਪਾਤਰ-ਚਿਤਰਨ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਸਦਭਾਵਨਾ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਆਦਰਸ਼ਵਾਦ ਦਾ ਅੰਸ਼ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ । ਇਹ ਦਰਸਾਉਣਾ ਵੀ ਉਸਦਾ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਮੰਤਵ ਜਾਪਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਲੋਕ-ਰਾਜੀ ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹਤ ਵਿਚ ਰਲ ਕੇ ਜੰਮੂ ਦੇਸ਼ ਨੂੰ ਲਾਭ ਹੀ ਲਾਭ ਹੈ । ਕਿਸੇ ਕਿਸਮ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਆਰਥਕ, ਰਾਜਸੀ ਤੇ ਸਭਿਆਚਾਰਿਕ ਨੁਕਸਾਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਜਿਸਦਾ ਇਸ ਮੇਲ ਤੋਂ ਅੰਦਾਜ਼ਾ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ।

ਡੀਡੋ ਜੰਮਵਾਲ ਵਿਚ ਜਦ ਉਹ ਇਸ ਮੇਲ ਨੂੰ ਨੇਪਰੇ ਚੜ੍ਹਦਾ ਦਰਸਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਉਸਦਾ ਨਜ਼ਰੀਆ ਆਦਰਸ਼ਕ ਨਹੀਂ ਰਹਿੰਦਾ । ਇਸ ਮੇਲ ਦੇ ਵਿਰੋਧ ਵਿਚ ਡੀਡੋ ਜੰਮਵਾਲ ਵਲੋਂ ਦਿਖਾਈ ਸੂਰਮਗਤੀ ਦਾ ਉਹ ਪੂਰਾ ਮੁੱਲ ਪਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਡੀਡੋ ਜੰਮਵਾਲ ਨੂੰ ਉਹ ਦੇਸ਼ ਭਗਤ ਸੂਰਮੇ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ । ਉਹ ਗਰੀਬਾਂ ਤੇ ਤਰਸ ਖਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਲੁੱਚਿਆਂ ਲਫੰਗਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਦੰਡ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ । ਜਿਵੇਂ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਆਪ ਹੀ ਭੂਮਿਕਾ ਵਿਚ ਲਿਖਦਾ ਹੈ; 'ਹੈਸੀ ਉਹ ਜੰਮੂ ਦੀ ਰਾਜ ਕੁਲ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਪਰ ਦੂਰ ਜਾ ਕੇ ਮਿਲਦਾ ਸੀ । ਜਦ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਨਜ਼ਰ ਪਹਾੜ ਤੇ ਪਈ ਤੇ ਡੁਗਰ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਨਾਲ ਮਿਲਾਣਾ ਚਾਹੁਣ ਲੱਗਾ ਡੀਡੋ ਸਹਿ ਨ ਸਕਿਆ । ਉਹ ਆਪਣੇ ਦੇਸ਼ ਨੂੰ ਸੁਤੰਤਰ ਰੱਖਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦਾ ਸੀ ।'

ਜੰਮੂ ਦੇਸ਼ ਨੂੰ ਸੁਤੰਤਰ ਰੱਖਨ ਲਈ ਡੀਡੋ ਪਿੰਡੋ ਪਿੰਡ ਫਿਰਦਾ ਹੈ । ਉਸਦੀ ਆਤਮ-ਬਲੀਦਾਨ ਦੀ ਭਾਵਨਾ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਮਨਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਧੂਹ ਪਾਉਂਦੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਲੋਕ ਉਸਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਰਲਦੇ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ । ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਜੰਮੂ ਦੇਸ਼ ਦੀ ਰਾਜ-ਸੱਤਾ ਦਾ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਭਾਗ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨਾਲ ਰਲ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ, ਇਸ ਲਈ ਉਸਨੂੰ ਜੰਗਲਾਂ ਤੇ ਪਹਾੜਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਲੁਕਣਾ ਛਿਪਣਾ ਪੈਂਦਾ ਹੈ । ਰਾਜਾ ਗੁਲਾਬ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਅਗਵਾਈ ਹੇਠ ਸਿੱਖ ਫ਼ੌਜ ਉਸਨੂੰ ਖੱਡਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਡੂੰਘਾਈਆਂ ਤੇ ਪਹਾੜਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਉਚਾਈਆਂ ਤੇ ਢੂੰਡਦੀ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਉਸਦਾ ਕਿਤੇ ਖੁਰਾ ਖੋਜ ਨਹੀਂ ਮਿਲਦਾ । ਉੜਕ ਉਹ ਤ੍ਰਿਕੁੱਟਾ ਮਾਈ ਦੇ ਪਹਾੜ ਤੇ ਘੇਰਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਸਿਰਲੱਥ ਸੂਰਮੇ ਦੀ ਮੌਤ ਮਰਦਾ ਹੈ ।

ਇਸ ਸੰਕਟ ਵੇਲੇ ਜੰਮੂ ਰਾਜ ਦੇ ਦਰਬਾਰੀ ਦੋ ਭਾਗਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੰਡ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ । ਜਿੰਨੇ ਵੀ ਵਡਿਆਉਣ ਯੋਗ ਪਾਤਰ ਹਨ ਉਹ ਡੀਡੋ ਜੰਮਵਾਲ ਦਾ ਸਾਥ ਦਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ । ਰਣਭੂਮੀ ਵਿਚ ਇਹੋ ਲੋਕ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਜੌਹਰ ਦਿਖਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ । ਉਹ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਿਪਾਹੀਆਂ ਦ ਟਿਕਾਣਿਆਂ ਤੇ ਹਮਲੇ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ, ਜੰਮੂ ਵਾਸੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਿਪਾਹੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਅਤਿਆਚਾਰਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਬਚਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਨਿਆਸਰਿਆਂ ਲਈ ਆਸਰਾ ਬਣਦੇ ਹਨ । ਡੀਡੋ ਜੰਮਵਾਲ ਦਾ ਇਹ ਕਥਨ ਤਾਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਮਨਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਧੂਹ ਪਾ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ :

ਡੀਡੋ ਜੰਮਵਾਲ : ਕੋਈ ਏਕਨ ਦਾ ਮੁਰਦਾ ਜੀ ਵੀ ਜਿਉਂਦਾ ਏ ਕਿਸੇ ਗੁਠੇ ।
ਕਿ ਜੀ ਵਿਚ ਤਮੱਨਾ ਜਿਸਦੇ, ਕਦੇ ਆਪੇ ਇਹ ਬਲ ਉਠੇ,
ਕਿ ਏਹ ਮੇਰੀ ਜਨਮ-ਭੂਮੀ, ਵਤਨ ਹੈ, ਅਪਨਾ ਮੇਰਾ,

ਪਵਿੱਤਰ ਧੂੜ ਇਸ ਧਰਮ ਦੀ, ਸ਼ੁਭ ਕਲਿਆਣ ਹੈ ਮੇਰਾ ।[7]

ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਧਿਰ ਉਹ ਦਰਬਾਰੀ ਬਣਦੇ ਹਨ ਜੋ ਸ਼ਕਤੀਸ਼ਾਲੀ ਤਾਂ ਹਨ ਪਰ ਸਵੈ-ਮਾਨ ਤੋਂ ਕੋਰੇ ਹਨ । ਲੋਕ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਡਰਦੇ ਤਾਂ ਹਨ ਪਰ ਸਤਿਕਾਰ ਬਿਲਕੁਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਦੇ । ਉਹ ਤਾਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਚੋਰ ਉਚੱਕੇ ਹੀ ਸਮਝਦੇ ਹਨ । ਲਾਲਾ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਸਾਗਰ ਨੂੰ ਆਪ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਇੰਨੀ ਘਿਰਣਾ ਅਨੁਭਵ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਤ੍ਰੀਮਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਰਗੀਆਂ ਲੋਭੀ, ਕਪਟੀ ਤੇ ਹੈਸਿਆਰੀਆਂ ਦਿਖਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ । ਖਾਣ-ਪੀਣ ਤੇ ਗਹਿਣਾ-ਗੱਟਾ ਇਕੱਠਾ ਕਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਸਿਵਾ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ ਵਿਚ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਹੋਰ ਕੋਈ ਮੰਤਵ ਹੀ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੁੰਦਾ ।

ਇਸ ਘਿਰਣਾ ਦੇ ਬਾਵਜੂਦ ਲਾਲਾ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਸਾਗਰ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਪਾਤਰ ਨੂੰ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਲੋਭ ਤੇ ਕਪਟ ਤੋਂ ਪਰ੍ਹੇ ਰਖਦਾ ਹੈ । ਇਸ ਲਈ ਉਹ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਵਿਧੀ ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ, ਭਾਵ ਨਾਟਕ ਦੀ ਮੁੱਖ ਭੂਮੀ ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟ-ਭੂਮੀ ਨੂੰ ਇਕ ਦੂਜੀ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਨਿਖੇੜ ਲੈਂਦਾ ਹੈ । ਮੁਖ-ਭੂਮੀ ਵਿਚ ਡੀਡੋ ਜੰਮਵਾਲ ਤੇ ਉਸਦੇ ਸਾਥੀ ਹੀ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ । ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਤਾਂ ਉਹ ਮੁੱਖ-ਭੂਮੀ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਹੋਣ ਦਾ ਅਵਸਰ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਦਿੰਦਾ । ਜੇ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਦੇ ਪਾਤਰ ਨੂੰ ਉਹ ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਅਵਸਰ ਪਰਦਾਨ ਕਰ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਤਾਂ ਡੀਡੋ ਜਮਵਾਲ ਤੇ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਦੇ ਪਾਤਰਾਂ ਵਿਚਕਾਰ ਟੱਕਰ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੋ ਜਾਣੀ ਸੀ । ਇਸ ਸੂਰਤ ਵਿਚ ਦੋਹਾਂ ਪਾਤਰਾਂ 'ਚੋਂ ਇਕ ਪਾਤਰ ਤੇ ਆਂਚ ਦਿਖਾਉਣੀ ਪੈਣੀ ਸੀ । ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਜੰਮੂ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਤੇ ਜਾਂ ਮਹਾਰਾਜ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਲੇਖਕ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਰਧਾ ਨੂੰ ਠੇਸ ਪਹੁੰਚਣੀ ਸੀ । ਮੁੱਖ-ਭੂਮੀ ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟ-ਭੂਮੀ ਵਿਚਕਾਰ ਨਿਖੇੜਾ ਪੈਦਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਦੋਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਠੇਸ ਤੋਂ ਬਚਾ ਲਿਆ ਹੈ ।

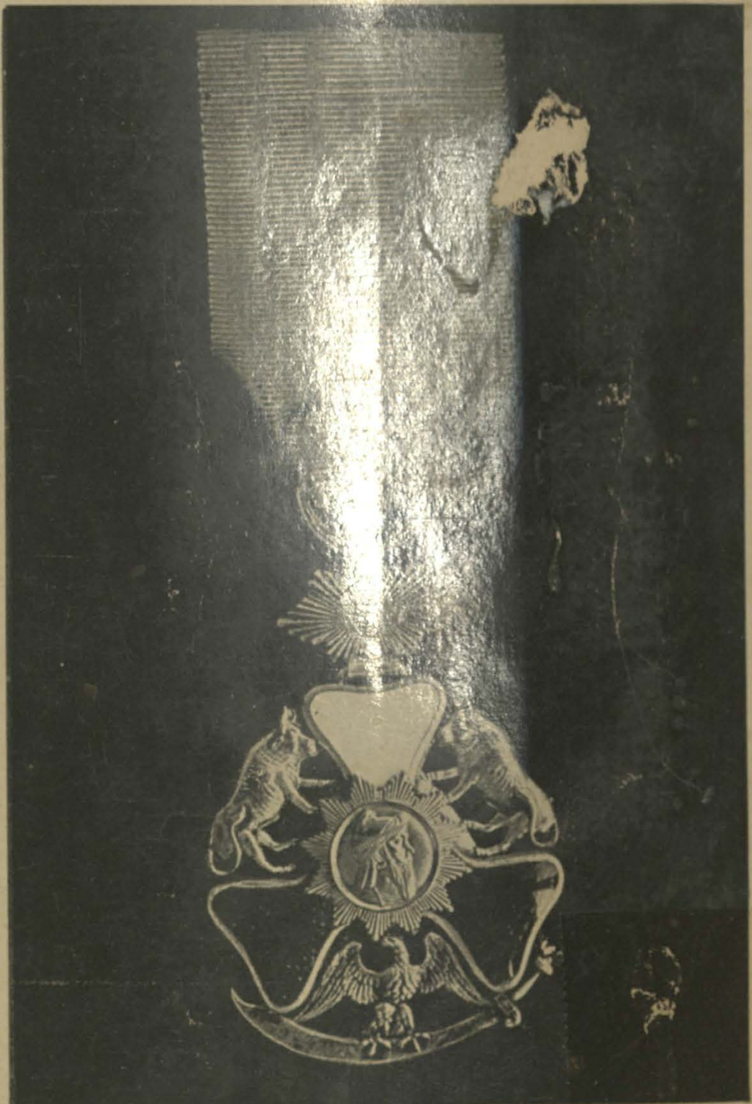
ਇਸ ਪੜਾਅ ਤੇ ਗੁਲਾਬ ਸਿਘ ਦਾ ਪਾਤਰ ਉਭਰਕੇ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਆਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ । ਜਾਤੀ ਹਿੱਤ ਦੀ ਪੂਰਤੀ ਲਈ ਲਾਹੌਰ ਦਰਬਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਆਪਣੇ ਭਰਾ ਧਿਆਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਨਾਲ ਹਾਜ਼ਰ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਉਹ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਪੂਰਨ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਜਿੱਤਣ ਦੇ ਸਮਰੱਥ ਹੋ ਸਕਿਆ ਹੈ । ਇਸਦਾ ਸਿਹਰਾ ਉਸਦੀ ਲਗਨ ਤੇ ਦ੍ਰਿੜ੍ਹਤਾ ਸਿਰ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ । ਜੰਮੂ ਰਾਜ ਦਾ ਕਪਟ ਟੋਲਾ ਅਵੱਸ਼ ਹੀ ਉਸ ਤੋਂ ਸਾਹਸ ਪਰਾਪਤ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ । ਇਹ ਸਾਹਸ ਪਰਦਾਨ ਕਰਕੇ ਵੀ ਗੁਲਾਬ ਸਿੰਘ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਕਪਟੀਆਂ ਵਾਂਗ ਕਪਟੀ ਤੇ ਪਲੀਤ ਸਿੱਧ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੁੰਦਾ । ਡੀਡੋ ਜੰਮਵਾਲ ਦੇ ਗੋਲੀ ਵੀ ਉਸੇ ਦੀ ਅਗਵਾਈ ਵਿਚ ਵੱਜਦੀ ਹੈ । ਜਿੱਥੇ ਉਸਦੇ ਪਹਿਲੇ ਕੰਮ ਤੋਂ ਉਸਦੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਰਾਜ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਵਫ਼ਾਦਾਰ ਹੋਣ ਦਾ ਸੰਕੇਤ ਮਿਲ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ । ਉਥੇ ਇਸ ਘਟਨਾ ਤੋਂ ਉਸਦੇ ਜੰਮੂ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਧ੍ਰੋਹੀ ਹੋਣ ਦਾ ਅੰਦੇਸ਼ਾ ਉਤਪੰਨ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ । ਕਿਰਪਾ ਸਾਗਰ ਇਸ ਅੰਦੇਸ਼ੇ ਨੂੰ ਬਲਵਾਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋਣ ਦਿੰਦਾ । ਜੰਮੂ ਰਾਜ ਨਾਲ ਧ੍ਰੋਹ ਕਮਾਉਣ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ

[7] "ਡੀਡੋ ਜੰਮਵਾਲ", ਸਾਗਰ ਪ੍ਰੈਸ, ਲਾਹੌਰ 1934, 67.

ਦੇ ਉਲਟ, ਗੁਲਾਬ ਸਿੰਘ ਤਾਂ ਜੰਮੂ ਤੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੀ ਸਾਂਝ ਵਲ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਿਤ ਹੈ। ਇਕ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਰ ਦੀ ਦੀ ਵਿਸ਼ਾਲਤਰ ਆਸ਼ਾ ਹੈ ਜਿਸਦਾ ਉਹ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਕ ਬਣ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਗੁਲਾਬ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਪਾਤਰ ਚਿਤਰਣ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਲਾਲਾ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਸਾਗਰ ਜੰਮੂ ਤੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੀ ਸਾਂਝ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਨੂੰ ਹੀ ਆਪਣੀ ਆਧਾਰਸ਼ਿਲਾ ਬਣਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਅਜਿਹਾ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਉਹ ਕਿੰਨਾ ਆਦਰਸ਼ਵਾਦੀ ਤੇ ਕਿੰਨਾ ਯਥਾਰਥਵਾਦੀ ਹੈ ਇਸਦਾ ਨਿਰਣਾ ਸ਼ੁਧ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਤੱਥਾਂ ਦੀ ਖੋਜ ਮਗਰੋਂ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕਾਰ ਹੀ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਨ। ਗੁਲਾਬ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਜਾਤੀ ਹਿੱਤ ਤੋਂ ਉਪਰ ਵਿਚਰਦਾ ਦਿਖਾ ਕੇ ਲਾਲਾ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਸਾਗਰ ਨੇ ਚਣੌਤੀ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਹੈ ਬਿਲਕੁਲ ਉਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਡੀਡੋ ਜੰਮਵਾਲ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ੰਸਕ ਹੋਣ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਨਾਲ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਤੇ ਜੰਮੂ ਦੀ ਸਾਂਝ ਦਾ ਇਛੁਕ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਇਲਾਕਾਈ ਹਿੱਤਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਉਪਰ ਉਠਣ ਦੀ ਚਣੌਤੀ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਾਰੀਆਂ ਲਿਖਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਘੋਖਣ ਤੋਂ ਇਹੋ ਨਤੀਜਾ ਨਿਕਲਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਉਭਰਦਾ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਪਾਤਰ ਆਦਰਸ਼ਵਾਦੀ ਰੰਗਣ ਵਿਚ ਰੰਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਹਿਜੇ ਹੀ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਤੱਥਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਠੇਸ ਪਹੁੰਚਦੀ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕਾਰਾਂ ਨੇ ਬੜੀ ਮਿਹਨਤ ਤੇ ਲਗਨ ਨਾਲ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀਗੋਚਰ ਕੀਤੇ ਹਨ। ਬਾਵਜੂਦ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਸਾਗਰ ਤੇ ਕੋਈ ਆਂਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਆਉਂਦੀ। ਇਸ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਇਸ ਵਿਚਾਰਧਾਰਾ ਦਾ ਪੱਖ ਪੂਰਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਤੇ ਜੰਮੂ ਦੀ ਸਾਂਝ ਤੇ ਆਧਾਰਿਤ ਸੀ।



Medal of Maharaja Ranjit Singh